Where Schools Are Really Bad, Let's Try Vouchers

The Washington Monthly

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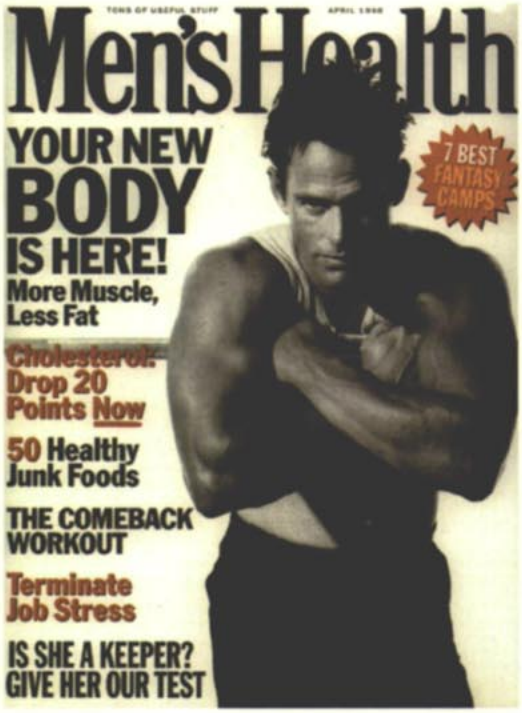
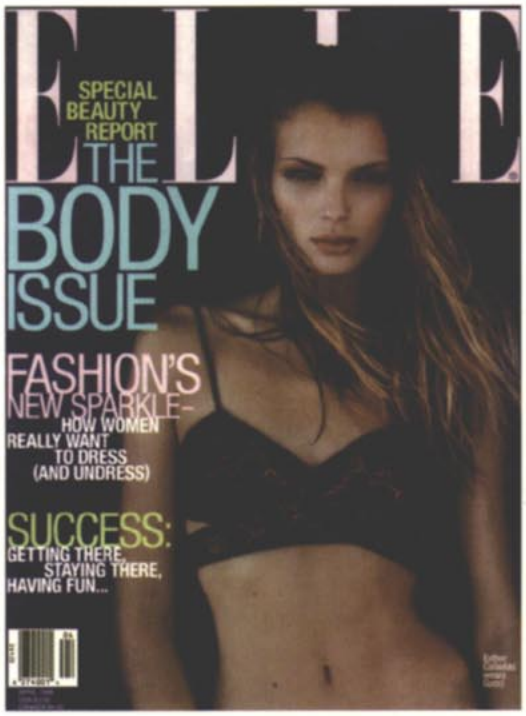
A Lobby the Media Won't Touch

A Kinder, Gentler Burma

Reviews by John DiIulio and Michael Lind

Gender Blending





How men's magazines are making guys as neurotic, insecure, and obsessive about their appearance as women

by Michelle Cottle

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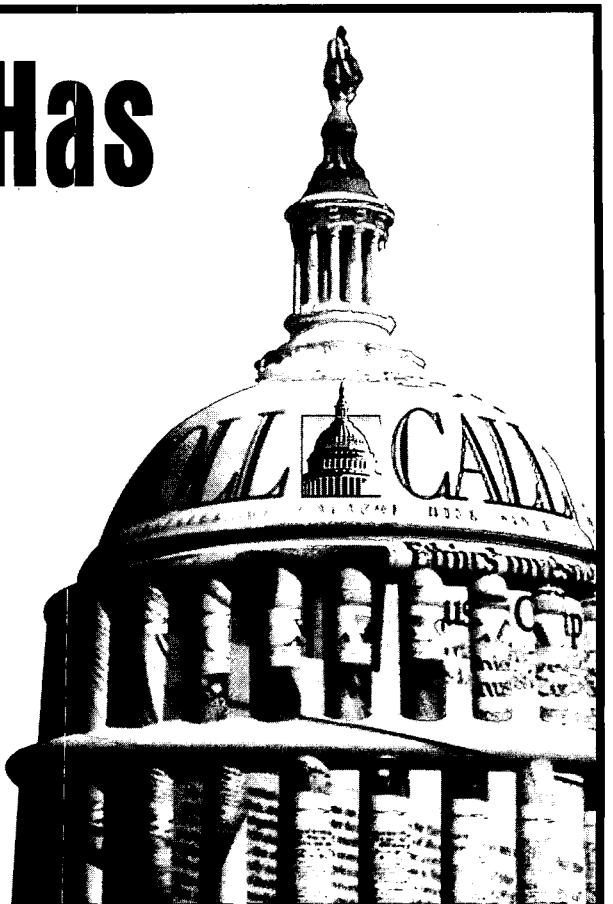

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Contents

The Washington Monthly
Volume 30, Number 5 • May 1998

Features

4 TILTING AT WINDMILLS
Junketing Judges . . . Killers on the Loose . . . Bill Gates, Bully . . . The Man Who Brought Us Paula . . . The Rise of the Personal Stylist.
BY CHARLES PETERS

8 **A Lobby the Media Won't Touch**
How the media lobby wields its power in Washington — and how it gets away with it.
BY ARTHUR E. ROWSE

15 **A Western Showdown**
Before he can reinvent the Forest Service, Mike Dombeck will have to outsmart Western Republicans on the Hill.
BY KATHIE DURBIN

20 **Reforming the Teachers' Unions**
What the good guys have accomplished — and what remains to be done.
BY ROBERT WORTH

25 **A Vital Compromise**
It's time to give vouchers a try in our worst public schools.
BY RICHARD WHITMIRE

28 **A Kinder, Gentler Burma**
For the right price, Washington lobbyists can put a positive face on the most oppressive foreign junta.
BY KEN SILVERSTEIN

Cover

32 ART & POLITICS
Turning Boys Into Girls
How men's magazines are making guys as neurotic, insecure, and obsessive about their appearance as women.
BY MICHELLE COTTLE

On Political Books

38 **The Lives Behind the Dream**
Remembering the foot soldiers of the civil rights movement.
BY JON MEACHAM

41 **A Man Obsessed**
LBJ was passionate, possessed — and one of the most complex men of our times.
BY CHARLES W. BAILEY

43 **Race and Reason**
Moving beyond demagogues toward a color-blind society.
BY MICHAEL LIND

46 POLITICAL BOOKNOTES
Reviews by James Surowiecki, Phillip J. Longman, Dani Rodrik, Adam Goodheart, and John DiIulio.

Departments

2 **Letters**

14 **Tidbits & Outrages**

19 **Memo of the Month**

27 **Monthly Journalism Award**

30 **Who's Who**

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Letters

Viva la Dissent

As a long-time subscriber, I usually admire the *Monthly* greatly. But the final item in your April "Tilting at Windmills" leaves me feeling that you need to get outside the Beltway more often. The "disastrous town meeting at Ohio State" was nothing of the sort. It was a rare, inspiring example of an informed citizenry refusing to succumb to an administration-sponsored propaganda campaign — one that both fed on and fanned the sensationalist press's hunger for another ratings smash, complete with theme music and digital logos.

Right now, it seems clear that the Ohio State event was perhaps the key event in reversing what had been, to that point, a headlong rush back to war. The "disastrous" event is even more significant when we realize that, had the event been "properly managed," we — the everyday Americans who actually fight in wars — could probably not have overcome the media's passionate longing for colorful killing.

JOHN GEAR
Vancouver, WA

Share the Blame

Must Charles Peters blame "extreme feminists" — a phrase generally considered right-wing code for people who support choice and equal pay — and their presumed scorn for nurturing professions for the short supply of nannies ("Tilting at Windmills," March 1998)? Since he provides no concrete evidence to sustain his claim, allow me to stoop to his sloppy methods and suggest that nannies are in short supply because our society at large heaps scorn on nurturing professions. Consider the shamefully low salaries of most male and female teachers, nurses, and clergy.

BARBARA BERMAN
San Francisco, CA

Judge Not

I wish I could say I was surprised by the letter from Laureen Goniwicha concerning Jonathan Dube's article ("After the Abortion," March 1998). Her last line says it all: "God forgives not the pro-choice movement." Which Bible does she read? Mine says God is a God of love, mercy, com-

Start At the Top!

The position of Publisher of *The Washington Monthly* will be open soon. The bad news is that it doesn't pay much. The good news is that it offers unusual scope and responsibility for the uncredentialed and inexperienced. We don't care if you have an MBA or a resumé laden with impressive job titles. What we do care about is enthusiasm, imagination, and public relations skills to attract readers and advertisers to the magazine. We'll decide that on the basis of interviewing you and talking with your references, not on the basis of your paper record. If you're interested, call Kathleen Nuccetelli at 202-462-0128 or fax us your resumé and cover letter at 202-332-8413. You can also mail your information to *The Washington Monthly*, 1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009.

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passion — and forgiveness. It also says that we are not the judge of our sisters and brothers; God is the judge of all.

Ms. Goniwicha appears to fall into the same sin as many of those who claim the term "Christian" applies only to them: the sin of making their own pronouncements as if they were God's judgment. Those who rush to proclaim their version of God's will need to remember that God's judgment is reserved for God — not for those who self-righteously claim it.

CORINNE SABO
San Antonio, TX

Moral Leadership?

I read with interest Charles Peters' "Tilting" column in the March 1998 *Washington Monthly* in which he wrote, "I agree," after quoting his friend Molly Ivins: "I don't care who [President Clinton is] screwing, as long as it's not the public."

I wonder, does he also agree with the following statement:

> On June 7, 1997, *New York Times* columnist Russell Baker spoke for many when he questioned the "sexual hysteria now racking the military." "What else was to be expected?" he asked. "The military is not a Boy Scout Camporee. It is teaching young people to kill other young people, a work that does not prosper when men are expected to behave like gentlemen and women like ladies." Baker could not be more wrong. It is precisely because the military is about killing people and destroying things that their leaders must have the strength of character inherent in a gentleman and gentlewoman. Otherwise, as Carl von Clausewitz, the great Prussian philosopher of war, warned some 165 years ago, "the mass will drag [them] down to the brutish world where danger is shirked and shame is unknown." What happens when leaders fail to act like "gentlemen" and "gentlewomen" is as near as today's headlines.
>
> Col. Harry G. Summers Jr.
> "An Officer and a Gentleman"
> *The Washington Monthly*
> September 1997

Let us pray that Clausewitz, Summers — and the *Monthly's* September issue — are dead wrong. Otherwise, given the behavior or our commander-in-chief, we are doomed.

DANNY DEJARNETTE
Tuscaloosa, AL

Deja Vu

On President Clinton's alleged sexual peccadilloes, Charles Peters approvingly notes, "My friend Molly Ivins says, 'I don't care who he's screwing, as long as it's not the public.'"

Ms. Ivins' remark is not totally original. Almost a century earlier, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the outspoken toast of the London theater and a noted letter correspondent with George Bernard Shaw, commented more elegantly but just as dismissively on an English sex scandal: "It doesn't matter what you do in your bedroom," Mrs. Patrick observed, "as long as you don't do it in the street and frighten the horses."

DAVID HEAPS
Princeton, NJ

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Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

Junketing Judges • Killers on the Loose • Bill Gates, Bully • The Man Who Brought Us Paula • The Rise of the Personal Stylist

FOR SEVERAL YEARS I'VE BEEN complaining about the renewed glamorization of smoking by Hollywood. Having been one of the poor fools who started smoking to imitate the movie heroes of the forties, I had welcomed the near absence of smoking in films of the '60s, '70s, and '80s, at least in the case of characters who were supposed to be admirable, so I have worried that the return of the glamorization in this decade might lead to another generation of fools like me.

Now comes evidence that I was right to worry. A recent chart in *The Wall Street Journal* showed that while the leading character smoked only once in five top movies of 1990, he smoked in 26 scenes in five comparable films in 1996. In this year's big hit, "Titanic," Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet smoke. The movie producer argued that his purpose was not to encourage tobacco use but to illuminate character, that DiCaprio's smoking showed he was a free spirit while Winslet's was an act of rebellion against a stuffy parent. Of course it was in the hope of displaying just such qualities that my friends and I started smoking in the '40s. The appeal is equally insidious today. Tobacco use among teenagers has risen a third since 1991, according to a study reported last month in *The New York Times*.

Young blacks are smarter about tobacco, smoking at a little more than half the rate of whites. But Hollywood is getting to them, too. Eighty percent more are lighting up today than in 1991.

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SOME EMBARASSING NEWS about the federal judges who are complaining about being overworked and asking for additional judges to be assigned to the courts: it seems that, according the General Accounting Office, in a 32-month period ending Oct. 1 these judges found the time to take 4,670 non case-related trips lasting 11,767 work days to destinations that included Luxembourg, Italy, England, Russia, Egypt, India, and St. Kitts and Nevis. "One of the jet-setting jurists," reports George Clifford III of *Congressional Quarterly*, "flew to Australia for a conference sponsored by the Australian Swim Coaches Association."

Have you ever wondered how many criminals just walk away?

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ONE WAY BLACKS ARE NOT BEING smarter is that they are not using seat belts. According to a report in the *American Journal of Public Health*, only 44 percent of young black males are buckling up, compared to 54 percent of white males. Females as a group are much better than males, but black females are the worst. This strikes me as particularly unwise, since it is well known that some cops tend to look for an excuse to stop black drivers. Of course, the police shouldn't be that way, but why give them a legitimate reason?

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THE STYLES SECTION OF *The New York Times* continues to give its affluent readers the information they need to stay chic. You will recall the pioneering article on how to hire and fire a personal trainer. Now comes the inside skinny on personal stylists. These, the *Times* explains, are "part wardrobe specialists, part image therapists ... the people who hunt through department stores, boutiques, ateliers, and showrooms in the quest for that ... perfect dress ... who book the makeup artist, kidnap the overextended eyebrow-shaper and arrange for the hairdresser, the trainer, and the personal chef." Their fees, in case you're interested, range from $1,500 to $5,000 a day.

Think you can't afford it? Well, another *Times* article may have the solution. It says that instead of paying the $5,000 for the bottle of 1982 Chateau Pétrus to go with your dinner at the St. Regis' Lespinasse, you can "amble a few doors west on 55th street to Michael's, a popular spot where the very same wine goes for a mere $1,000."

Styles also offers tips on how to cut down that $30,000 to $40,000 you have to shell out annually to keep your daughter in one of the glamorous jobs in the fashion industry where she may be underpaid but might also meet and marry a Kennedy, a Koch, a Roehm, or a Trump. Here's the secret, according to Styles, of the young women who manage to live a champagne lifestyle without a parental subsidy: They live with

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roommates and "buy from designers like Hermes at steep discounts during private sales, to which they're invited by friends who work for the houses."

"Women's magazine editors," the *Times* adds, "acquire nearly their entire wardrobe — shoes, suits, bags, jewelry — at wholesale directly from designers' showrooms." Aren't those the designers featured in the articles published by the same editors? In Washington, similar facts would inspire a congressional investigation and the appointment of a special prosecutor.

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CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS continue to add to their long record of dedicated service to the big lobbies. It was Republican members who killed campaign finance reform in the House and Senate. And it was Republicans who killed the recent effort to toughen drunk-driving laws. "One of the reasons why 17,000 Americans were killed on our roads last year is because the liquor industry writes our nation's drunk driving laws," Democratic Rep. Nita Lowey told *The New York Times*, adding "I'm absolutely disgusted." So am I.

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WHEN IT WAS ANNOUNCED ON the afternoon of Friday, April 10, I thought that the Northern Ireland peace agreement would surely be treated as one of the most hopeful events of 1998 and that it would dominate talk shows over the weekend and be the cover story on the newsmagazines that would appear on Monday. But it was not featured on any of the magazine covers and was only mentioned on one, getting one line on *Time*'s. Inside, *Time* gave the story three pages, *U.S. News and World Report* two and *Newsweek* only one. *Newsweek* devoted its cover to the final episode of "Seinfeld." I watched only two of the talk shows, but neither "Washington Week in Review" nor "Inside Washington" seemed to find the agreement worth much attention. Ironically, the best coverage I caught was Jim Lehrer's "News hour", which aired on PBS one hour before "Washington Week" and included a moving interview by Elizabeth Farnsworth of my new hero, George Mitchell.

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JOHN MCCAIN IS A SENATOR I usually admire, but recently he did something I didn't like at all. Having abandoned the free-time provision from his campaign reform bill, he then got in a turf battle with the FCC when it started developing its own rules requiring free time for candidates. McCain tried to get an amendment attached to an appropriations bill that would forbid FCC action on free time, and his allies on the House Appropriations Committee threatened to cut the FCC's budget if it dared to act on free time. The result is an apparent retreat by FCC Chairman William Kennard.

As veteran readers of this column know, I regard free time as the most important of all campaign reforms. It could eliminate the need for most of the money that now must be raised for political campaigns, and it would at last require broadcasters to give to the public something substantial in return for the licenses to mint money that we now give them free.

So it's maddening for McCain, who understood the need for free time enough to require it in his original bill, to now stand in the way because of a turf battle with a regulatory commission. Who cares whether the FCC or Congress does it, as long as the right thing gets done?

One group that does care is the media lobby. It doesn't want either the FCC or the Congress to do anything about free time. Read about it and its dismaying power — power that is particularly depressing because it is wielded against the public interest by the very same media barons who profess to be guardians of that interest — in Arthur Rowse's article beginning on page 8 of this issue.

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YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THE Gang Who Couldn't Shoot Straight but perhaps you weren't sure who they were. I have the answer. It's the 3,600 members of the District of Columbia Police Department. How can I say such a thing about our men in blue? At least half and perhaps as many as 60 percent of the District's police officers are not certified to use their weapons, according to the findings of an investigator hired by the city council that were recently reported by *The Washington Post*'s Cheryl W. Thompson.

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"ONGOING DRUG USE. RAMPANT theft. Open gay and lesbian sex. Widespread access to personnel records without any security clearance. That's what veteran FBI agent Gary Aldrich found when he returned to the White House in January 1992," says a promotional brochure from the conservative weekly, *Human Events*. In January 1992 and for the following year, the White House was being run by George Bush.

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A FEW YEARS BACK WE TOOK A look at the Washington YMCA and found it was devoting itself largely to serving as a club for affluent yuppies and doing next to nothing for the needy youth most of us thought it was designed to help. Now I learn from the *Charleston Gazette* that the YWCA in my hometown is now being run as a Nautilus facility. YW membership fees go to Nautilus. Members who want their dues to support traditional Y social programs are told that they should give an additional donation above their dues for those programs.

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KATHLEEN WILLEY AND MONICA Lewinsky would be living lives of quiet anonymity had it not been for David Brock's 1993 article in *The American Spectator*. Although Bill Clinton must be pleased by Brock's apology for the article, the president must be maddened by the realization that if Brock had just left one word out of the article, he would not have been sued by Paula Jones, Lewinsky and Willey would not have been deposed, and Ken Starr would not have had Monicagate to investigate. That one word was "Paula." If she had not been identified in the article, she would not have sued.

And if Brock had not written the *Spectator* article at all, it's entirely possible that there would have been no Whitewater Independent Prosecutor. Here's my guess as to why: You will recall that the Whitewater story began to heat up just days after Brock's appeared. His article did not delight Hillary Clinton. The president was in the dog house. It seems possible that to placate his wife on Troopergate the president agreed to go along with her desire to stonewall on Whitewater, a decision he took even though practically the entire White House staff was urging quick, full disclosure of all Whitewater sins, which were after all minor and ancient. So, the White House took the nondisclosure route, and demands for some kind of special prosecutor grew and grew, finally to the point that Janet Reno had to appoint Robert Fiske, who was later replaced by Ken Starr.

Who cares whether the FCC or Congress does it, as long as the right thing gets done?

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HOW CAN YOU AVOID THOSE pesky fees banks seem to charge for almost every action you take with your account? Simple, the consumer advisers say. All you have to do is switch to one of the smaller banks that are usually a lot more merciful than their big brothers when it comes to tacking those extra charges on your monthly statement. There's just one catch. First, you must find a small bank before it is swallowed up by one of the giants as part of the merger mania that is dominating the financial news these days.

Bank regulators have been far too lax in letting mergers go unchallenged. Small banks not only tend to charge fewer fees, they're usually friendlier as well, much more likely to extend credit on the basis of your character instead of just looking at the balance sheet. The justification for the mergers is that big banks make bigger profits. But all that does is reveal one of the major faults of capitalism, namely that bigger profits are more important than better service.

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WAS THE LAW FIRM OF BAKER and Hostetler overcharging its client Sporicidin Co.? The company decided to find out. It hired an auditor to check the firm's bills. Here's what he found, according to *The Washington Post*'s David Segal: "$24,053 [had been charged] for injunction papers that were never filed, $5,891 for seven people to research one statute and $177,251" for what Segal describes as "the army of staffers to update one another on progress in the case."

Harry J. Maue, chairman of a legal auditing firm, told Segal that in the course of investigating the billing practices of law firms, he had found a score of attorneys billing more than 24 hours of their time in a single day. One lawyer even managed to bill 62 hours in one day. A partner in a Chicago firm billed clients for 5,471 hours in a single year. That's 15 hours a day, every day of the year, including weekends and holidays.

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IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND Republican opposition to campaign finance reform, all you have to know is that, according to a Federal Election Commission report cited in *The Washington Post*, "Republicans raised $416 million in soft money last year, compared with $221 million for the Democrats."

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HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED how many criminals just walk away? I began to ponder this matter because of three different stories that appeared in recent weeks in *The Washington Post*. One story told of how a jury had found Franklin Eugene Hall guilty of killing another man while driving drunk and had recommended that he be imprisoned for 10 years. Hall was permitted to remain free on $10,000 bail until his sentencing date. When court convened on that date, Hall was not present. Giving up $10,000 in return for avoiding 10 years in the slammer would seem like a pretty good deal to most people and in fact Hall was probably only losing about $500, which is all the cash the bailee usually has to hand over to a bondsman for a bond of this size.

In the second story, another driver charged with manslaughter was not required to post any bail. Unsurprisingly, he did not show up for trial. When charged with vehicular homicide in Ohio three years ago, he had also failed to show up.

In still another *Post* article, this one about St. Elizabeth's Hospital, the District of Columbia psychiatric facility, the headline tells the story: "A Disappearance a Day." The disappearances have included, according to the *Post*, "killers, robbers, and sex offenders" — in other words the criminally insane as well as the nice gentle Elwood Dowds are getting out when they feel like it, in the *Post*'s words, "by failing to return after being grant-

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ed a 'city pass,' by sneaking off the unsecured grounds, or by escaping from locked wards."

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DURING THE RECENT GULF CRISIS, the commander of the U.S. fleet ordered all ships to assemble for a photo opportunity. While the fleet was having its picture taken, five Iraqi ships seized the opportunity to slip across the narrow strait of Ormuz to Oman and thus avoided the blockade our Navy was supposed to be enforcing.

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NOT BEING A COMPUTER expert, to put it as kindly to myself as possible, I hesitate to pass judgment on the allegations against Bill Gates and Microsoft — with one exception. Even I can understand how Microsoft has tried to screw the Palm Computing Company. Palm had developed a small minicomputer that proved to be a tremendous success. So Microsoft put out its own version and called it PalmPC. How would I have felt if Bill Gates called *Slate The Washington Monthly* when he started it? Just like the poor Palm people feel today.

There is a lesson for Bill Gates here. *Slate* is better known today than *The Washington Monthly*. You don't have to be a brutal bully and steal a small company's name. Call your minicomputer Slot or Slut or anything but Palm. If it's good, it will do well and your soul will be in much better shape.

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IS PRESIDENTIAL TRAVEL becoming a tad too imperial? Clinton's recent trip to Africa required three planes to transport the party of 800 that accompanied the president. According to R.W. Apple of *The New York Times*, 250 were reporters and network technicians, including 58 for Fox News. We can't help wondering how many members of the party came from the White House Communications Agency described in our December issue. Its 800 employees are among the great experts of the Western World on expanding marginal tasks to require the maximum commitment of personnel.

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A WASHINGTON JUDGE RECENTLY gave a life sentence to a young man who had been found guilty of carjacking. Sounds excessive but I can understand what riled the judge. He had planned to give a shorter sentence but when the defendant was asked why he had plunged a knife into the back of the woman whose car he took, the young man explained that he felt she was to blame for not handing over the keys to the car.

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ONE REASON BANKING REGULATION is too lax is that we have too many regulators competing to please the regulatees. A new book, *You Won — Now What*, by Taegan D. Goddard and Christopher Riback describes former Senator Don Riegle's attempt to consolidate the four existing regulators into one agency. The effort failed because each of them, and its constituent regulatees, fought to defend its turf. Why do you think each group of banks was loyal to its regulator? There were a number of factors, but you can be sure that it was not that the regulator was too tough.

Goddard and Riback have an interesting theory about why Clinton backed away from supporting consolidation: The Federal Reserve is one of the regulators and its boss, Alan Greenspan, opposes consolidation. Clinton's economic plan needed Greenspan's cooperation if it was to have a chance, so Clinton wasn't about to risk offending the Fed chairman.

Incidentally, its need to keep its banking constituents happy is a potential chink in the Fed's moral armor that financial reporters should be more aware of than they seem to be.

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THE TEMPTATION TO COOK THE books seems especially irresistible in the Postal Service. You will recall the West Virginia post office that did well on a test of mail delivery by discovering which pieces had been sent by Price Waterhouse, the firm conducting the test, and taking special care to make sure they got delivered promptly.

Now comes a memo that shows that boys at the Postal Service's headquarters in Washington aren't above a little hanky-panky themselves. They're trying to persuade the independent Postal Rate Commission to allow a one-cent increase in the price of a stamp. But they also want to brag about their success in cost reduction — a success that does not exactly constitute compelling evidence that they need the increased revenue a rate increase would produce. So the memo pleads with postal employees to come up with "updated information on cost increases to offset the decreases."

Unfortunately, the memo got mixed in with a bunch of material that was sent to the Rate Commission which disclosed it at a public hearing reported by *The Washington Post*'s Bill McAllister.

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TWO RECENT HEADLINES that should make you get down on your knees and pray for the future of the republic: "Run for Congress? Parties Find Rising Stars Are Just Saying No" from *The New York Times* of March 15, and "Prominent Would-Be Challengers Are Declining Senate Races" from *The Washington Post* of April 5.

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A Lobby the Media Won't Touch

How the media lobby wields its power in Washington — and how it gets away with it

BY ARTHUR E. ROWSE

FOR MORE THAN A YEAR NOW, IN THE best tradition of a free press, "NBC News" has been aiming its proud beak at examples of what it calls the "Fleecing of America" — public offenses often committed by the big, bad federal government. One of the show's segments last July singled out the owner of a telecommunications company in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who had won four licenses at a poorly advertised auction for the rights to public airwaves serving 16 million people with cell phones, beepers, walkie talkies, and other electronic devices. The winning price: $1 per license. Anchor Tom Brokaw reported that the company's chief, Clark McLeod — who said he would have paid up to $200,000 for the licenses — "stands to make a fortune with your help, and you didn't even know about it. Your government gave him the deal of a lifetime. You decide: Is this the Fleecing of America?"

But while you're deciding, ask yourself another question: Where exactly was NBC's "fleecing" crew when the network and its fellow broadcasters won the right to use the new digital TV channels without paying a dime? Each channel contains enough bandwidth to offer six separate ones that can be used, not only for high definition TV (HDTV) broadcasts, but also for subscription services ranging from wireless cable to data transmission. Based on auction revenues for other public airways in recent years, the FCC had estimated that a public sale of the digital spectrum could bring up to $70 billion to the U.S. Treasury. Instead, the major broadcasters got the rights to a significant — and highly lucrative — chunk of the airwaves spectrum, for absolutely nothing.

Is it possible that Brokaw & Co. did not recognize the parallels between the episode in Cedar Rapids and what happened in Washington? If so, this lack of imagination was apparently shared by the other network giants: A data search for "digital TV auction" drew no hits on any of the broadcast networks during a time when CNN ran 31 stories in 16 months. Or did the decision of the big four news divisions to ignore the debate on digital auctions have more to do with keeping the public eye off the political machinations of their network employers and of their employers' employers — corporate parents such as General Electric, News Corp., Westinghouse, and Disney? As Tom Brokaw would say, "You decide."

Anatomy of a Windfall

The auction controversy began heating up in late 1995, when then-Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole (R-Kan.) announced that he wanted to add auction requirements to the telecommunications reform bill he and House leaders had nearly completed after a four-year struggle. The law's main aim was to transform the long-regulated telecommunications industry into a more competitive market, which would bring lower consumer prices. The key to Dole's sudden departure from the long-awaited deal became apparent in a private meeting (one of many) on November 30, 1995, between top broadcasters, legislators, and lobbyists, including Fox's Rupert Mur-

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doch and the heads of other networks. According to a report of the meeting in *The Washington Post* — first appearing six weeks after the fact — Dole asked broadcasters: "Why should I give you a $40 billion giveaway when you're driving my [approval ratings] through the floor on Medicare?" The disgruntled Republican leader then formalized his demand for an auction with a speech in the Senate. The major news outlets, however, showed little interest in this development, even failing to pick up the *Post*'s report of Dole's bold threat.

After the telecom bill passed the House in January 1996, Dole vowed not to let it through the Senate without further discussion of the spectrum giveaway. Finally, Dole convinced other congressional leaders to send a letter to the FCC, asking Chairman Reed Hundt for assurances that, if the bill were passed, Hundt would not allow licenses for use of the new spectrum to be handed out until the possibility of an auction received further review on the Hill. Hundt agreed. The bill sailed through the Senate and was signed into law the following month by President Clinton. A still dissatisfied Dole, however, kept agitating for spectrum auctions, eventually winning the support of Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and a few other legislators equally horrified by the mammoth giveaway. By March, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the industry's chief lobby, had had enough insolence. Flexing its muscles, the industry decided to go around Congress to the "grassroots" with a $9.5 million blizzard of public service announcements attacking auctions as "a tax on free television" that would force "your favorite shows" off the air. As a result, lawmakers were buried under an avalanche of pleas to save "free TV." Dole accused broadcasters of "bullying Congress" and misleading the public. But on June 11, he stepped down to run for president. A week later, his successor, Louisiana Republican Trent Lott, quietly sealed the deal for broadcasters. In a letter to the FCC co-signed by House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other GOP leaders, Lott directed the agency to disregard Dole's wishes and grant broadcasters the new channels without auction by April 1997.

So what happened? Some say Gingrich had been co-opted by the industry, as evidenced by the infamous book deal with HarperCollins (another Rupert Murdoch property) and by the Speaker's allowing Donald Jones, a wealthy cable entrepreneur and GOP contributor, to work for months in his office under cover. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that Jones (whose firm included a subscription cyberporn service) spent most of 1995 as a part-time "volunteer" in Gingrich's office at a time when key parts of the telecommunications bill were being negotiated. On the Senate side, industry observers suggest that Trent Lott's letter to the FCC marked a high point in the career of Edward O. Fritts, the president of the NAB — and a close friend and college classmate of Lott. But the fact that congressional leaders could hand out such a treasure trove of public property without causing an uproar was due not so much to expert lobbying as to thin news coverage. As Senator McCain says: "In the final analysis, the pressure has to come from the people."

But "the people" had been kept pretty much in the dark about what was going on. (Inquiries by *The Washington Monthly* to the network chiefs at ABC, CBS, and NBC about the lack of coverage of telecom issues brought only silence. For his part, veteran CBS newshound Mike Wallace clarified recently: "I've been waiting to do a story on the telecom bill now for over a year, but I still haven't found a peg for it.") With essentially no network reporting on the auction issue and little on other telecom issues during the two-year debate, it fell to the print press to take up the slack. But it too failed to distinguish itself, possibly reflecting many publishers' big stakes in radio and TV. The New York Times' Broadcast Group, for example, comprises eight television and two radio stations; The Washington Post Co. owns six TV stations; and Gannett, the owner of some 93 newspapers nationwide including *USA Today*, operates 20 television stations. A telling survey of 100 newspapers by James H. Snider and Benjamin I. Page of Northwestern University found that "every one whose owners got little TV revenue editorialized against the spectrum 'giveaway,' whereas every one with high TV revenues editorialized in favor of giving broadcasters free use of spectrum."

Even after winning such a monumental spectrum gift, as well as gaining relaxation of limits on the number of radio and television stations that one company may own, broadcasters were still hungry. Unhappy with the FCC's plan to make them return their current (also free) analog channels by 2006, they rolled Congress again with a clause inserted into last summer's tax-budget agreement that added so many conditions for returning the channels that many observers believe the stations will never be given up. Station owners in large cities also obtained the eventual right to bid for a second station in the same city, despite a long-standing ban against such duopolies. And as for the creative, entrepreneurial uses to which broadcast-

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ers had pledged to put their new spectrum: Within a month of broadcasters receiving this second handout, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that, instead of gearing up to offer consumers HDTV programming, "networks are now talking about using just a portion of the high-capacity digital spectrum to offer extra channels of standard TV signals that don't look much different from what is already on."

The Power of the Press

How do the media get away with such shenanigans? Their power rests in four basic areas: 1. Their central role as information distributors. 2. Their increasing importance to candidates at election time. 3. Their creative application of the First Amendment right to free speech. 4. The enormous power they wield through lobbying and campaign contributions.

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The media's role as information provider to the public puts them in a class apart. One aspect of that power is the media lobby's ability to act in its own interest virtually without fear that it will face much, if any, public scrutiny. For example, in 1995 a number of media outlets, including CBS and *The Washington Post*, got involved in a Supreme Court case appealing a $2 million punitive damages award granted by a lower court to a BMW buyer whose car had a defective paint job. For nearly two decades, many news organizations have advocated strict limits on court awards for damages due to defective products, mainly because of the potential effects on libel awards. So when the BMW case came before the high court, CBS organized a friend-of-the-court briefing arguing that "even the strictest due process limitations on punitive awards may not be adequate to protect First Amendment values in [libel] cases." But when it came time to exercise their First Amendment duty to educate the public on this issue, the media were selective in what they reported, particularly regarding their own participation in the case. In nine stories run on the subject in *The Washington Post* while the case was pending in 1995 and 1996 (including editorials in favor of legislation aimed at limiting punitive damages awards), the editors disclosed the company's involvement in the case only once — after the Supreme Court's ruling (which, incidentally, went in the media's favor, wiping out the award and setting the first national guidelines for handling such cases). Among other organizations joining in the amicus brief were ABC, NBC, the *Los Angeles Times*, Knight-Ridder, and Dow Jones & Co. Yet a data search of news and commentary in these news outlets showed no mention of company participation.

This role as information provider also gives the media the ability to make or break any public servant with the use — or non-use — of news and commentary. Common Cause calls it "the power to shape the news." Although examples of gross unfairness by the media are rare, there are enough instances to make legislators and bureaucrats wary. Many remember what happened to Dan Glickman, the current secretary of agriculture and former congressman from Kansas. His troubles started back in Wichita in 1992 when the local arm of Multimedia Cablevision, apparently enraged by Glickman's vote earlier that year in favor of freezing cable rates, flooded its 53 channels with "editorials" against his reelection bid. The company aired anti-Glickman jabs more than 2,000 times before agreeing a week before election day to run some pro-Glickman spots. Glickman squeaked by with only 52 percent of the vote, compared to the 71 he garnered in 1990.

Then, of course, there is the media lobby's economic clout. It is not only among the biggest spenders on lobbying services, but also among the biggest contributors to federal candidates. According to the Center for Responsive Politics, contributions from communications and electronic sources to federal candidates and parties in the 1995-6 election cycle totaled $53,179,278, divided almost evenly between Republicans and Democrats. The four networks alone contributed $4 million. (Not included in

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these figures was a last minute contribution of $1 million given to the California Republican party by Rupert Murdoch.) Not surprisingly, the largest recipients in the Senate and House were the heads of the telecommunications subcommittees, Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.), who received $515,499 and Rep. Jack Fields (R-Tex.), who got $221,228. Seats on these committees and their parent "commerce" panels, also known as "cash cow" committees, are among the most sought after in Congress.

When you consider how reliant politicians are on the media for both access and campaign donations, it's hardly surprising that, when it comes to personal contacts, nobody has a greater ability to open doors than newspaper publishers and broadcasters. Few successful politicians can afford not to be on cordial, if not close, terms with the media when elections roll around. (See "The Washington Buddy System," page 12.) Nowhere are such personal ties more important or more finely tuned than in Washington, where the flourishing cocktail and dinner circuit includes all sides of the influence business: the favor seekers; favor givers; and the principal conduits, media figures and lawyer/lobbyists. Two 1997 books, one by Katherine Graham, chair of the executive committee of *The Washington Post*, and the other by Sally Quinn, writer and wife of Ben Bradlee, vice president-at-large for the *Post*, richly illustrate the camaraderie among such movers and shakers. So do the guest lists for White House dinners. And the guest books of Rupert Murdoch and Bill Gates. They recently played host to Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-La.), chair of the House Telecommunications Subcommittee; Senator McCain, chair of Senate Commerce; and other legislators, according to *Broadcasting & Cable*. Such friendships help pave the way for the media lobby to gain the ear of policy makers the next time an issue comes up affecting its interests. In fact, the situation has reached the point where broadcasters are becoming downright arrogant, say regulators at the FCC. According to one official, they don't even try to argue policy, rather they come in with the attitude: "If you don't do what we want, we'll kill you on the Hill."

Finally, long among the media's favorite lobbying weapons has been the First Amendment. Though an invaluable guarantee of journalistic freedoms, the First has been increasingly wielded by media interests to gain competitive advantages and improve the industry's bottom line. For more than a half-century, newspapers have relied on constitutional arguments to win exemptions from laws applying to other businesses, including paying retail sales taxes in many areas and observing bans on monopolistic practices and on the use of child labor. (For decades, underage deliverers were called "little merchants.") The First Amendment has even been trotted out by publishers and broadcasters to fight attempts to restrict cigarette ads in order to protect the health of youngsters. In 1971, broadcasters went to court to block a ban that Congress had directed to begin that year over the airwaves. They argued that the ads constituted commercial speech, and were thus protected by the First Amendment. The Supreme Court rejected their plea, handing the

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media lobby one of its rare defeats. In his book *Democracy and the Problem of Free Speech*, University of Chicago law professor Cass Sunstein effectively debunks the notion that commercial and political speech merit equal protection under the law. Political speech is at the "core" of the First Amendment, argues Sunstein, because "[r]estrictions on political speech have the distinctive feature of impairing the ordinary channels for political change." The same dangers do not apply to, and thus the same degree of protection is not appropriate for, commercial speech. Nonetheless, 16 years later, when Congress began considering bills to extend the ban to print media, publishers dusted off the same free-speech argument. And at a thinly covered Senate hearing in March on the proposed tobacco settlement, the White House sided with publishers' claims that curbs on tobacco ads would be unconstitutional.

On another front, publishers managed to get an obscure clause tucked into the 1996 minimum wage increase allowing them to stop paying benefits and taxes for certain carriers and distributors, now mostly adult "independent contractors." (A similar request by other types of business failed to make it through Congress.) In a glowing victory statement, John F. Sturm, president of the Newspaper Association of America, heaped praise on many publishers and their law firms, adding that "this is going to save a lot of newspapers a lot of money in the future."

But perhaps the granddaddy of First Amendment-based lobbying efforts by publishers is their century-long battle for deep discounts on postal rates. It was publishers who launched the national crusade against "junk mail," mainly in order to increase their own substantial cost advantages over other sources of advertising. Their principal argument has been that Congress originally set up preferential rates for subscription periodicals to recognize their "educational, cultural, scientific, and informational" value, an indirect reference to press privileges.

Broadcasters like to ride the free-speech argument too. They invoked it to kill the Fairness Doc-

The Washington Buddy System

(Key persuaders for media interests and their ties to those in power)

Howard Baker, AT&T — former Senate colleague of Lott, Dole, and others.

Peggy Binzel, Fox and other networks — ex-legislative assistant to Rep. Jack Fields, former chair of House Telecommunications Subcommittee.

Tommy Boggs, MCI and newspapers — friends in Congress too numerous to name.

Jack Clough, News Corp. — ex-staff chief of House Energy and Commerce when headed by Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), now ranking member.

Bob Dole, Microsoft competitors — former Senate Majority Leader.

Thomas J. Downey, Time Warner, Microsoft, cable TV — former House Democrat and close friend of Vice President Gore and key legislators.

Ralph Everett, regional telephone companies — former aide to Sen. Fritz Hollings (D-N.C.), key Democrat on Senate Commerce.

Martin Franks, senior vice president of CBS — former director of Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Eddie Fritts, president of National Association of Broadcasters — ex-college classmate at Ole Miss of Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-La.).

Terry Haines, AT&T — chief of staff to former FCC Chair Alfred Sikes.

Vernon Jordan, director of Dow Jones and senior partner at Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, whose clients include AT&T, Time Warner, and CBS parent Westinghouse — close confidant of President Clinton.

Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform, GOP's chief direct-mail arm, and representative of Microsoft — close adviser to House Speaker Newt Gingrich and other Republican leaders.

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trine, and cable companies have attempted to use it (unsuccessfully so far) to keep from carrying local television programs without charging broadcasters. NBC, for example, is counting on it to keep from adopting the program rating system accepted by other networks. The First Amendment also has been a prominent tool in the demolition of proposals to reform campaign finance laws. Although a few publishers and broadcasters have backed plans for giving candidates free air time, broadcasters were credited with killing the provision in the McCain-Feingold bill before the ill-fated legislation even made it to the floor. An aide to Senator McCain explained that the issue was "too contentious." In March, McCain went a step further, introducing legislation to kill talk at the FCC about ordering free airtime — an idea deemed "unconstitutional" by NAB chief Fritts. McCain was seeking to end the administration's attempts to get broadcasters to offer such a service in exchange for digital channels. McCain's move coincided with a march on Congress and a new national campaign by broadcasters to convince the public that they are already up to their ears in good works, such as collecting toys for tots and raising funds for charities.

Not even the Supreme Court is immune from lobbying by media groups on First Amendment grounds. As in the BMW punitive damages case, media organizations often jump into the fray with friend-of-the-court briefs and related editorials when they see an issue that may affect their own commercial operations. The Newspaper Association of America saw such a need in a case involving the prices set by an independent oil dealer because the decision might affect pricing practices of newspapers. The court agreed with the publishers.

Tony Podesta, head of Podesta Associates, representing newspapers and broadcasters — brother of John Podesta, staff secretary of President Clinton.

Thomas Tauke, regional phone companies — former member of House Telecommunications Subcommittee.

Kimberly Tauzin, administrator, NAB government relations — daughter of Rep. Billy Tauzin (R-La.), chair of House Telecommunications Subcommittee.

Vin Weber, AT&T — former Republican congressman and close friend of Newt Gingrich.

Ward White, vice president for government affairs, Bell South — hometown pal of Bob Dole.

Thomas (T.C.) Williams, AT&T — ex-classmate at Georgetown of Rep. Thomas Bliley (R-Va.), chair of House Commerce Committee, and longtime friend of Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (S.C.), key Democrat on Senate Commerce Committee.

Sources: Legal Times, National Journal, Congressional Quarterly, Ken Silverstein, and others.

It Just Keeps Growing and Growing ...

Now for the payoff. Mergers and new technologies have rapidly extended the term "media" to include not only broadcasters and publishers but firms specializing in cable, satellites, telephones, movies, music and, of course, computers and the Internet, bringing such financial heavy hitters as Microsoft into the fray. Such consolidation has added considerably to the lobby's economic clout. According to scorekeepers at J.P. Morgan Securities Inc., stock prices of publicly traded radio and television companies doubled in the past two years. And despite a freeze on rates of larger systems, cable company stocks grew by 60 percent, while newspapers jumped 80 percent (this, compared to a mere 24 percent rise in the Dow Jones average). Last year alone, cable topped all 62 other industry groups in stock growth, as measured by Morgan, while broadcasting and newspapers ranked third and sixth, respectively.

Although journalistic functions are only peripheral in some of the resulting organizations, they seem to be enough of a unifying factor to suggest a future megalobby of communication, entertainment, and content firms that will make today's media force look like Mickey Mouse. With all the potential conflicts from in-house theme parks, retail stores, sports teams, sheep ranches, distilleries, and nuclear reactors, there is a growing fear that this extended mediapoly will further diminish the already fading integrity of journalism. Already, the next push by the media elephants has started at the FCC, pressuring the agency to relax its long-standing limits on cross-ownership of broadcast properties. And no matter what happens there, the battle is sure to switch to the more media-friendly climes of Capitol Hill, where influential legislators have already introduced bills to break the ban.

Paging Tom, Dan, Peter. ●

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Tidbits & Outrages

Junior, Get Down Off That Roof This Minute!

Warning label on a Batman costume: "Parent: Please exercise caution … Mask and chest plate are not protective; cape does not enable user to fly."

Thank God the Cuisinart was broken

A Texas woman has been sentenced to death for murdering an 80-year-old man with a paring knife, a butcher knife, a grapefruit knife, two forks, a hammer, and a lamp.

Don't give Phyllis Schlafly any ideas

The Malaysian state of Kelantan recently banned darkness in theaters in an attempt to prevent couples from kissing during the movies.

Just dial K-911

A Dallas executive explaining to *Governing* magazine why the city's pooper-scooper law has such a low enforcement rate: "We have to actually observe the animal defecate to be able to issue a citation, and there's no way we can answer a call in time to still witness the offense."

ART: RENEE WINFIELD

Now you understand the warning label on the Batman costume

A man is suing dairy farmers and the Safeway grocery chain, claiming that years of drinking whole milk clogged his arteries and led to a stroke.

One Man, One Beer, One Vote

With elections falling on St. Patrick's Day this year, Chicago officials set up voting booths in bars to encourage residents to vote.

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A Western Showdown

Before he can reinvent the Forest Service, Mike Dombeck will have to outsmart Western Republicans on the Hill

BY KATHIE DURBIN

THE SHOWDOWN BETWEEN FOREST Service Chief Mike Dombeck and Republican congressional leaders had been building for months. When it finally came, on March 26 of this year, Dombeck was summoned to appear at an unprecedented joint hearing of three House committees — Resources, Budget, and the Interior Appropriations subcommittee — to defend his agency against charges of gross financial mismanagement. House Resources Chairman Don Young (R-Alaska) and Helen Chenoweth (R-Idaho), who chairs the Resources subcommittee on forests, browbeat Dombeck with a highly critical new report from the General Accounting Office (GAO) that condemned the agency's financial statements as "unreliable" and accused the service of being unable to account for large expenditures of tax dollars. Sen. Larry Craig (R-Idaho), who made a guest appearance, stormed, "This is the worst mismanagement in the service's history."

Dombeck conceded there were problems at the agency, whose antiquated budgeting and accounting systems are still tied to its rapidly declining timber sales. But the legislators' complaints about such issues were just a sideshow. Everyone in the hearing room knew what had really prompted this confrontation: Dombeck's landmark efforts to reinvent his embattled agency. The Forest Service, consumed for the past half-century with cutting timber, is on the cusp of a new era, and Mike Dombeck's plans for the agency are making some Western Republicans in Congress very nervous.

KATHIE DURBIN, *a Portland, Ore.-based freelance journalist, is the author of* Tree Huggers: Victory, Defeat, and Renewal in the Northwest Ancient Forest Campaign.

Road Blocks

In January, Dombeck announced an 18-month moratorium on construction of new roads in most national forest roadless areas. The moratorium is necessary, he said, to allow the Forest Service to begin addressing a $10 billion backlog of road-maintenance needs. Fewer than half the 430,000 miles in the national forest road network are adequately maintained. The Forest Service can't just walk away from these old logging roads. Over time, culverts become dislodged, blocking fish passage, or the roads themselves slump down hillsides, dumping payloads of soil into streams and wiping out fish spawning beds. With adequate funding, the agency could close thousands of miles of roads, stabilize them, and upgrade those that remain in use.

But Dombeck's moratorium also stands to delay timber sales totaling between 100 million and 275 million board feet — a fact not well-received by Western Republicans in Congress. After Dombeck's announcement, Idaho's Senator Craig fired off this alliterative masterpiece: "While we understand there are unmet road-repair needs, it is going to take more than press releases, private leaks, preservation-group pandering, and predictions of peril from the Forest Service before we are convinced they are serious about this." More to the point, GOP legislators are threatening to slash the Forest Service's budget in retaliation for Dombeck's moratorium. "If you want to get their attention, [the budget] is the best way," declared Congressman Young. (This, despite the fact that the Tongass National Forest in Young's home state is excluded from the moratorium.)

As if this weren't enough to irritate Western GOP legislators, last year Dombeck became the first Forest Service chief to admit that the agency's timber-sale program is a serious money-loser. Some agency

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observers say it's about time. Based on its own accounting system, which doesn't calculate the costs of building roads, repairing streams, or making payments to state and local governments, the agency reported that it lost $15 million selling timber in 1996. The GAO, which uses a different system, pegged the loss at $995 million between 1992 and 1994. However you tally the cost, the agency was so strapped in 1997 that it had to transfer $77 million from other dedicated funds to pay for a shortfall in its road, recreation, and state reimbursement programs because its National Forest Fund was bankrupt.

One reason for the shortfall is the agency's controversial "purchaser road credit" program, which allows federal-timber buyers to deduct their road-building costs from the price they pay for timber. Eliminating the program would have saved the Treasury $50 million last year. The high costs of the sub-subsidy has united deficit hawks with conservationists in opposing the program as the blatant giveaway it is. The Clinton administration, sensing an opportunity to satisfy both camps, proposed last year and again this year to end purchaser road credits and put more money into management of existing logging roads. Both years, Congress came within a vote or two of ending the program. In 1997 the proposal might have passed the Senate had Vice President Al Gore been present to cast the tie-breaking vote rather than off on a fund-raising trip.

The timber industry, understandably, is not eager to see its windfall abolished. And Republican legislators such as Chenowith, Craig, and Young, who have a vested interest in keeping their powerful timber constituents happy, have already begun working to derail Dombeck's roads initiative. Shortly after President Clinton, at the signing of the 1998 Forest Service appropriations bill last fall, announced that the agency was developing "a scientifically based policy for managing roadless areas in our national forests," Western legislators fired a warning shot. In January, six GOP senators — Craig, Frank Murkowski of Alaska, Slade Gorton of Washington, Conrad Burns of Montana, Gordon Smith of Oregon, and Craig Thomas of Utah — sent U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman a letter offering to sit down with him and address the Forest Service's road maintenance problem. But the senators also cautioned Glickman not to reopen the roadless area issue, which had been fought out during bitter negotiations in the early 1980s: "[W]e cannot agree — and we believe there would be widespread congressional opposition — to a flat moratorium on roadless area entry, a redefinition of roadless areas, the designation of any new land use categories, or any other unilateral Administration initiative that vitiates the release language agreements that were forged in a bipartisan fashion in the last generation of state wilderness bills," they wrote. (The letter, like most missives on this issue from the GOP leadership, was crafted by Mark Rey, a smooth-talking former timber lobbyist who now staffs the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.)

Glickman apparently heeded the warning; Dombeck's road-building moratorium, announced later that month, does not directly address the future of roadless areas, even though numerous scientific panels have urged the agency to protect these de facto wildlands from further resource exploitation because of their importance as pristine wildlife habitat and sources of pure water. Dombeck also exempted the spotted owl forests of the Pacific Northwest and the Tongass National Forest of Alaska from the moratorium. Both regions are operating under new management plans. The chief said those plans deserve a chance to work.

Needless to say, conservationists were disappointed at the limited scope of the roads moratorium. "The president had a great opportunity to leave an environmental legacy with this roadless policy and it looks like he is going to squander it," said Matt Zencey of the Alaska Rainforest Campaign.

The Battle Plan

But environmentalists may be underestimating the scope of the transformation Dombeck has in mind for the Forest Service. Roads are just the beginning. In March, the new chief unveiled a Natural Resources Agenda for the 21st Century. It focuses on four goals, none of them having to do with "getting out the cut": watershed restoration, "sustainable forest ecosystem management," repair and downsizing of the national-forest road system, and meeting the recreation needs of an increasingly urban population. In a speech to the agency's 36,000 employees, Dombeck said:

> We have two very basic choices ... We can sit back on our heels and react to the newest litigation, the latest court order, or the most recent legislative proposal. This would ensure that we continue to be buffeted by social, political, and budgetary changes. Or we can lead by example. We can lead by using the best available scientific information based on principles of ecosystem management that the Forest Service pioneered. And we can use the laws that guide our

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management to advance a new agenda. An agenda with a most basic and essential focus — caring for the land and serving people.

Dombeck is backing up this rhetoric with concrete budget proposals. (Budgeting and financial accountability aren't sexy issues, but they are at the heart of Dombeck's challenge as he tries to reshape the tradition-bound Forest Service.) For the first time ever, the Forest Service has submitted a budget to Congress that is tied not to board feet of timber sold but to forest restoration and recreation goals accomplished. For example, Dombeck is asking for enough money in fiscal 1999 to increase streambank restoration projects by 40 percent, habitat restoration projects for threatened and endangered species by 30 percent, and national forest acreage burned in prescribed fires and other fuel-reduction strategies by 400,000 acres.

Dombeck is also proposing to decouple the Forest Service budget from timber receipts, an essential change if his agenda is to become more than rhetoric. Under the present system, programs ranging from recreation to wildlife habitat improvements are paid for with timber receipts. With timber sales down by two-thirds since the late 1980s, most experts agree that this formula must change if the Forest Service is to make serious inroads into repairing forests damaged by overcutting, overgrazing, fire suppression, and neglect.

For starters, Dombeck wants to end the system under which the agency makes payments to counties with national forests out of a fund equal to 25 percent of its annual timber receipts. Instead, he proposes creating a permanent appropriation of $275 million to stabilize payments to forest-dependent counties and school districts. Chris Wood, Dombeck's speechwriter, says the current system is obsolete and forces counties to become advocates for unsustainable rates of logging. "Why is it," he asks, "that the wealthiest nation in the world is paying for the education of our rural kids on the back of our federal timber program?"

And Dombeck faces another challenge. Because "ecosystem management" involves the integrated management of natural systems, from salmon to mushrooms to ponderosa pine forests, it doesn't lend itself to line-item budgeting. The GAO acknowledged as much in its new report when it said, "Currently, there is no clear link between the Forest Service's ecosystem-based goals and objectives and its budget line items, funding allocation criteria, and performance measures."

To speed institutional change, Dombeck directed his staff early on to establish new performance measures for every forest supervisor in the country within six months. "We need these measurable standards — aquatic ecosystems restored and maintained, acres of noxious weeds treated, acres of abandoned mine sites reclaimed," he said. "I'm not sure the fact we can't afford it is a valid argument. Sometimes you've got to make investments in land."

Again hoping to derail Dombeck's reform efforts, in February, Craig, Young, Chenoweth, and Murkowski fired off a letter threatening to slash the Forest Service budget to a "custodial" level that would leave the agency with only enough money to put out fires, maintain major transportation routes, and perform other essential mandated functions. It was another Mark Rey masterpiece. "In the face of continuing controversy over Forest Service management, it is increasingly clear that the costs of managing the National Forest system are increasing ... and may, in the view of some, outweigh the benefits being received by interest groups, communities, and the public," the Republicans wrote. "While it is painful for us to contemplate, the time may have come to instead consider ways to reduce the investment of billions of dollars each year in light of the increasingly diminished returns on that investment." In other words, if the Forest Service isn't producing timber and forage, what's the point of funding it?

Senator Craig has even taken aim at Dombeck's personnel management, demanding justification for the chief's decision to reassign four of his five deputies — as if it were any of the senator's business. But congressional interference in internal Forest Service matters is nothing new. It's a longstanding western tradition, one that undermined the authority of Dombeck's predecessor, Jack Ward Thomas, and that has been the undoing of many a progressive forest manager. Dombeck, however, seems undeterred. Unlike Thomas, Dombeck knows better than to fight his battles without a corps of trusted lieutenants. He has fired or reassigned entrenched Forest Service administrators who might have worked to undermine his agenda, and replaced them with his own management team. One of his first official acts, performed at the behest of his bosses, was to fire veteran deputy chiefs Gray Reynolds and Mark Reimer, who epitomized the Forest Service old guard. Dombeck also brought two trusted aides with him from his stint as acting director of the Bureau of Land Management: Chris Wood, his speechwriter and media guy, and Francis Pandolfi, his chief of staff.

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A New Era

Despite his troubles on the Hill, Dombeck remains convinced that the American people are ready for his vision of a new Forest Service. At his Jan. 6, 1997, swearing-in, Dombeck declared in a speech to employees, "Our first priority is to protect and restore the health of the land. Failing this, nothing else we do really matters." At the annual conference of the Society of Environmental Journalists, held last October in Tucson, Dombeck was asked to predict the future of the agency's timber-sale progam. He wouldn't venture numbers but told an audience of hundreds of journalists: "We're going to revert back to a light touch on the land. We may be a decade away from looking at single-tree removal ... I really see us moving away from the era of large clearcuts. Society has told us that." A Wisconsin-born former schoolteacher and fishing guide who trained as a fisheries biologist, Dombeck likes to talk about "collaborative stewardship" and the need to serve new constituencies, including nature-deprived city-dwellers.

Thus far, his approach is playing well with the public. On the timber issue, Dombeck has ridden a wave of public support generated by outrage over the salvage rider in 1995 (chronicled in the October 1996 issue of the *Monthly*). That disaster started in 1994, when Republican leaders began beating the drum of "forest health." The strategy was simple, even transparent: They took a real and pressing issue, the deterioration of some forests due to a century of fire suppression and overcutting, and turned it into an argument for a massive program of "salvage logging," ostensibly to reduce the risk of future wildfires. It was this campaign that brought the nation the timber salvage rider. But the rider backfired when environmentalists exposed it as a license for the timber industry to cut down pretty much anything it wanted. This revelation damaged the Clinton administration politically, and Craig, one of the rider's key backers, failed to win passage of his own permanent "forest health" bill in the 104th Congress. The ghost of the salvage rider also haunted efforts by Bob Smith (R-Ore.) to get a similar bill, opposed by Dombeck, through Congress this year. On March 27, the House defeated the bill 201-181, with 51 Republicans voting in opposition. The margin of defeat surprised even environmentalists, who had mounted an all-out campaign to kill it.

Dombeck admitted soon after his confirmation that the salvage rider debacle had given the Forest Service a black eye and a serious credibility problem. "The words 'forest health' have become unnecessarily value laden and incorrectly characterized to imply 'log it to save it,'" he told a House Resources subcommittee in March 1997. "If we are to move beyond the divisiveness associated with implementation of the salvage rider, we must begin a more productive and credible dialogue about forest health."

Truly restoring forest health, he said, will require an array of tools, including prescribed fire, thinning of dense stands, noxious weed management, and stream bank improvements. And restoring the public's trust, an equally daunting task, will require the Forest Service to focus on those activities, while limiting salvage logging to less controversial areas of the national forests and avoiding stream corridors, old-growth stands, and roadless areas.

In addition to his current reform efforts, Dombeck may be the first Forest Service chief to take seriously the question more and more citizens are asking: Is it time to call a halt to a federal timber sale program that destroys fish and wildlife habitat — and bleeds the Federal Treasury to boot — in order to keep a few dozen mills running, a few thousand millworkers employed?

Certainly not everyone in Congress thinks so. But a bill sponsored by Rep. James Leach (R-Iowa), and Rep. Cynthia McKinney, (D-Ga.), which would move to "zero cut" — an end to commercial logging on the national forests — now has 23 sponsors, including two other Republicans. *The Washington Post* has endorsed the principles of zero cut.

For the record, Dombeck opposes zero cut. But it's clear that he's already playing to a new constituency: not Big Timber but America At Play. One example is Dombeck's new emphasis on recreation as a major use of the national forests and potential source of new revenue. Last year, at the direction of Congress, the agency began a controversial pilot program of charging user fees at trailheads and entrances to popular national forest roads. The chief is aggressively pursuing "partnerships" with private industry and contracting with concessionaires to manage trails, campgrounds, and other recreation facilities. Industrial-strength recreation carries its own environmental perils, of course — but that's another story.

The fact is that Dombeck is taking the Forest Service a giant step down the road from wholesale commodity production toward a renewed mission of stewardship. That's why Reps. Craig, Murkowski, and Chenoweth, are so furious. The end of timber primacy is in sight, and they know it, and they won't go down quietly.

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Memo *of the* Month

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON
March 16, 1998

The Honorable Daniel Patrick Moynihan
United States Senate
464 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0001

Dear Daniel:

I was very pleased to learn about the recent birth of your twins. Tipper joins me in sending our warmest congratulations and best wishes to you. We know that everyone close to you shares the excitement of the new additions to your family.

As the parents of four children, we understand the joy you are feeling at this special time. I am confident that the years to come will be filled with pleasure as you watch your children learn and grow.

Please accept my congratulations and hopes for a happy and successful life for you and your new babies.

Sincerely,

Al

Al Gore

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Reforming the Teachers' Unions

What the good guys have accomplished — and what remains to be done

BY ROBERT WORTH

ONE MORNING LAST FALL, 28 LEADERS of the nation's largest union, the National Education Association (NEA), spent a few hours touring through the three cavernous plants of the Saturn car company in Spring Hill, Tennessee. As they wandered past synchronized robot arms and a mechanized foundry that turns foam shapes into engine parts, the unionists commented on the "surreal" placidity and apparent contentment of the workers. But this was no science field trip. NEA President Bob Chase had organized the visit in order to witness Saturn's innovative arrangement with the United Auto Workers union, which has helped to make it into one of the industry's biggest success stories. And his larger agenda was glaringly obvious to the union reps he took along with him. After three decades of old-fashioned bargaining for better pay and working conditions, Chase and his counterparts in the smaller American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have earned a reputation as the bureaucratic "blob" that is weighing down our public schools. Now Chase and AFT president Sandra Feldman are eager to show the world that they're serious about "reinventing" themselves as advocates for academic accountability and high standards.

It's not an easy task. After Bob Dole's landmark attack on the teachers' unions at the 1996 Republican convention, the NEA conducted a study which concluded that "the NEA is now painted as the number one obstacle to better public schools." Ever since, the NEA and the AFT, which are set to merge starting later this year, have been struggling to improve their public image. In January 1997, Chase gave a speech at the National Press Club (titled "It's Not Your Mother's NEA") in which he offered a personal recantation of his earlier resistance to reform as a state NEA official in the 1980s. At the 1997 summer convention in Atlanta, union delegates voted to change their policies on several crucial school reform issues including charter schools, peer review, and standardized tests.

But when confronted with the hard facts of the Saturn plant, the union leaders were less enthusiastic. According to *Education Week*, one NEA affiliate president asked a Saturn worker what his company would do if parts from one of its suppliers varied widely in quality. The answer came easily: switch suppliers. But it didn't go over well with the visitors. In the world of teachers' unions, privatization — even of non-educational services like food and transportation — is still viewed as the ultimate heresy. The fact that Saturn's innovations were driven by competition with Japan was an even sorer point, since it suggests an argument that the unions still fiercely resist: public schools could use some competition, too. And what about the Saturn unionworkers' contract, which is a mere 33 pages long — unlike those thick protective tomes the teachers are used to? Or Saturn's "Risk and Reward" program, which provides incentives for workers who do well, and sanctions for those who don't? Don't these analogies suggest that the teachers' unions should be finding similar ways to reward good teachers and force out the bad ones?

Chase's Saturn tour exemplifies his campaign for reform. It sounds like the dawn of a new era, a radical new role for teachers' unions — until you start

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asking what he's actually done to translate those good intentions into action. Pressed for an explanation, Chase is quick to point out that the NEA is a vast organization (there are 13,000 local affiliates) and can't turn around quickly. As recently as a year ago four Wisconsin NEA affiliates signed a letter to Chase comparing his call for a "new unionism" to the policy of appeasement with the Nazis in the 1930s. Meanwhile, the stakes are getting larger. If the proposed merger goes through, Chase will be the nominal head of a single teachers' union representing 3.2 million people, more than 80 percent of American public school teachers. For that reason alone, it's worth taking a look at how much the reformers have achieved and how much farther they have to go.

Labor Pains

Chase isn't the first union leader to call for reform. Former AFT president Al Shanker, who died last year, used his weekly syndicated "Where We Stand" for many years to take thoughtful positions on some of the toughest issues facing public schools. Under his leadership, the AFT helped to win passage of "zero tolerance" laws on violence in schools, and to advocate national academic standards. The NEA, which opposed standardized tests until recently out of fear that teachers would be blamed for their students' scores (which is precisely the point), recently came on board, and is now promoting national standards as well. So far the U.S. cult of local control has kept them at bay, despite Clinton's support. But the unions (particularly the AFT) have also pushed for statewide tests. In Texas, student scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) are published every year. "There's tremendous accountability when it hits the newspaper," says Gayle Fallon, president of the Houston Federation of Teachers.

Fallon is one of the many AFT leaders who have helped to earn their organization some respect even among its fiercest ideological enemies. For instance: Earlier this year the right-wing Heritage Foundation devoted a cover story to Thaddeus Lott, a Houston elementary school principal who used rigorous, back-to-basics methods to turn around a failing school in a blighted neighborhood. He now manages four schools with almost complete autonomy to hire and fire teachers, thanks to an innovative arrangement that predated the Texas charter school law. Who found Lott, promoted him, and helped him to evade the school board's rules? You guessed it: Gayle Fallon, whose godson attends one of Lott's schools.

Yet Fallon is an exception; even Shanker himself never really acknowledged the problems that came with the very nature of teachers' unions. Ironically, Shanker helped to create these problems by leading the first great teachers' strike in 1961 and winning collective bargaining rights. In every state that recognized them, the unions could now negotiate with school boards on behalf of all district teachers to gain standardized pay schedules, better working hours and conditions, and direct union deductions from paychecks.

What Shanker failed to see was that the industrial model isn't exactly a perfect fit for education. Union contracts mandate an assembly line-style seniority system, whereby teachers are hired and promoted regardless of performance. They also support a hopelessly bureaucratic licensing system that encourages mediocrity and repels smart young people. Perhaps worst of all, the unions are duty bound to defend their most incompetent tenured members, in a process that has often taken years and cost school districts hundreds of thousands of dollars. By the 1990s the NEA and the AFT had become the targets of frequent blistering attacks in the press, each of which described another classroom Hannibal Lecter who simply could not be fired.

For the most part, Al Shanker skillfully avoided facing these problems, or claimed that higher academic standards and greater respect for teaching as a profession would make them go away. But Bob Chase says he wants to address them. In an astonishing reversal of NEA dogma, Chase declared repeatedly in 1997 that "it is our job to improve [poor] teachers, or, that failing, to get them out of the classroom." How does he propose to do it?

The answer he offers most often is "peer review." This is an idea with a long history — and, until recently, very little application. It started in 1981 when Dal Lawrence, the president of the Toledo Federation of Teachers (the AFT local), persuaded his school district that veteran teachers would do a better job of evaluating teacher performance than principals. Under the union's plan, new teachers in the district start off with an "internship" year during which they are supervised by a "consultant teacher" (who is responsible for several teachers, and works full time reviewing them). At the end of the year the consulting teacher presents his case to the intern board of review, which is composed of five union teachers and four management people, on whether or not to retain the new teacher. There is also an "intervention" program for retraining or weeding out veteran teachers.

When Lawrence started the program, "the entire union was outraged. Except for one person." Luckily,

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that person was Al Shanker, who came to Toledo and applauded Lawrence for his innovation. Still, many union members continued to deplore peer review as heresy until the past few years, when the AFT leadership finally began to promote the Toledo program. The NEA, which opposed peer review for years, only reversed itself last summer. "First they said we couldn't do it," says John Grossman, president of the Columbus, Ohio local that pioneered peer review in the NEA 12 years ago. "Then they ignored us. Then, six years later, they gave us an award."

Teachers who've gone through these programs say they make an enormous difference, keeping teachers and administrators vigilant about the level of teaching throughout their schools. Yet how much difference has peer review actually made? In Toledo, about 64 percent of the roughly 170 interns who start every year have been fired. Thirty-five experienced teachers have been put into the "intervention" program since 1981, and 23 of them have been fired or allowed to leave (there are about 2,800 teachers in the district). The Columbus program has eliminated about 6 percent of each year's roughly 300 starting interns over the past decade. It has also taken 178 veteran teachers in for "intervention" evaluation, in a system with about 4,700 teachers. About 85 of those have been fired or quit (or retired), and most of the rest are teaching again.

So there's some evidence to support Chase's claims about his union's commitment to getting poor teachers out of the classroom — but not a lot. Peer review is still only being used in a handful of districts. Moreover, handing unions that much power to hire and fire teachers isn't necessarily a good idea. Good schools need strong principals, but they rarely get them in a system where principals know they aren't responsible for the quality of their teachers.

What the unions should really be focusing on is state tenure laws, which make it extremely difficult to fire problem teachers. Currently it takes the average district two to three years and $60,000 to fire a teacher. "Tenure negates a district's ability to look at other options," says Anne Bryant, executive director of the National School Boards Association. Replacing current tenure laws with short-term contracts, to be renewed after a performance review, would go a long way toward clearing the deadwood from our schools. The unions have long resisted this reform, which is after all the practice in many of our best private schools. In the past year the NEA and AFT leadership have finally opened the door to revising (though not abolishing) tenure. "It's under discussion in a number of state affiliates," one NEA official told me. Chase could win a lot of credibility for his reform efforts by pushing for it.

Another item in Chase's agenda has been incentives for good teaching, like the "Risk and Reward" program at Saturn. Currently, teachers are rewarded for their years of service, not for their ability. "The system is deeply flawed, because it provides dollars no matter what happens in schools," says Joe Nathan, director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute. "Unions have certainly contributed to that." Both Chase and Sandra Feldman now acknowledge that the seniority system is inadequate. Their solution is to offer financial and professional incentives to teachers who become certified with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which was created in the late 1980s and has won wide respect for the rigor of its training programs.

Yet this isn't much of an advance either. The NBPTS is still under construction, and doesn't yet offer certification in most fields; there are less than a thousand certified teachers nationwide. Furthermore, it would be better to have incentives tied directly to student achievement than just to teacher training. (There is no hard evidence that teachers who've gone through the NBPTS program have improved the performance of their students.) In fairness to the unions, a number of "merit pay" schemes have been tried in schools around the country, and education critics on the left and the right agree that they've been a failure.

Still, that's no excuse for the current system, which reduces all prospective public school teachers to the same level no matter what their skills. Our best private schools hire and promote on the basis of subject knowledge and demonstrated teaching ability, not just on having taken a few meaningless "education" classes. There's no reason why public school certification can't be raised to the same high standards, and the unions should be putting all their strength into that effort.

What about charter schools, which offer a way around many of the bureaucratic rules the unions have held to? As recently as 1991, the NEA was "unalterably opposed" to them, and when it reversed its policy last summer it received a lot of good press. Yet here again the "new unionism" line is not all it appears to be. NEA and AFT leaders favor charters only so long as they hire certified teachers and abide by a number of other union-friendly rules. At the local level, many affiliates have actively fought charter laws, or burdened them with so many regulations that they become meaningless. In Arkansas, "the union essentially wrote the charter law," says Joe Nathan, "and it's

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a joke. There are no charter schools."

That may be changing, if only because the unions have had to make some concessions in order to keep fighting school vouchers, which they still resist with all their might. (Even small-scale voucher programs for the worst-performing school districts are distorted by the union lens into "lifeboat" strategies that hurt students and pose a dire threat to public education.) In Arizona, the union's struggle to derail a voucher bill resulted in the strongest charter school law in the country. "Politically, you can't make those [anti-voucher] speeches and then turn down public charter schools too," says Arizona's state School Superintendant Lisa Graham Keegan, who helped to put the law through.

Charters could be a crucial wedge issue for the unions, because their method — minimum regulation, maximum accountability for student performance — is diametrically opposed to the traditional union position. If Chase and Feldman really want to transform their unions, they'll reach out to the growing numbers of charter schools whose intial five-year contracts are starting to come due. These charter members could then start to exert pressure on the union from the inside. "Media-wise, it would be a big mistake for the unions to tell us to take a hike," says Yvonne Chan, the principal of an enormously successful school in Los Angeles whose charter is up for renewal in May, and who hopes to negotiate a new union contract for her teachers. "We have proved to the public that we can achieve the dreams the unions always said they wanted."

Which Side Are You On?

Will the unions ever stop fighting vouchers and place themselves squarely behind charter schools, teacher accountability, and tenure reform? That may depend on how threatened they feel. In the past, their cozy relations with the Democratic party have protected them from the cold air of change. Ever since 1976, when the NEA broke its longstanding nonpartisanship policy to endorse Jimmy Carter and he rewarded them by creating the Department of Education, the unions have been big campaign players. Myron Lieberman, author of a 1997 book on the teachers' unions, estimates that the NEA and the AFT together spent over $50 million for the 1996 campaign, compared with $35 million by the AFL-CIO. At the 1996 Democratic convention the teachers' union caucus constituted 11 percent of all delegates. That's a bigger share than the state of California. At the state level they're even more firmly entrenched, as Dante Chinni wrote last year in the *Monthly* ("Teacher's Pets," Jan./Feb. 1997)

This alliance has done far more than just damaging union credibility with governors, school board members, and local politicans. It's a great irony that the Democrats, who ought to be the party of the poor, have done so little to improve the public schools that hold them down. Clinton has scarcely touched on the need to get problem teachers out of these schools, and he has adamantly resisted limited voucher trials, which may be the only way out for many poor kids (see Richard Whitmire's article in this issue). There can be little doubt that Clinton's agenda has been shaped by his party's dependence on the unions. And while the unions are right that many conservative voucher advocates seem bent on seeing the end of our public school system, the Democrats could end up achieving that goal for them if they aren't willing to make the relatively minor concessions that could save it.

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A Vital Compromise

It's time to give vouchers a try in our worst public schools

BY RICHARD WHITMIRE

REMINDERS OF THE SORRY STATE OF our urban public schools wash over us daily in waves of headlines about high failure rates, collapsing school buildings, and incompetent teachers. Meanwhile, the politicized debate between private-school voucher proponents and public-school defenders has become almost as numbing as the stories of school failure. As an education reporter for a national chain of newspapers, I have found the rhetoric on both sides to be at odds with the reality. Caught up in the ferocity of the debate, many advocates seem to have lost touch with the basic question that should be at the root of reform: What are the ingredients of a successful school in a poor district?

Let's start with Houston's Roosevelt Elementary, a jewel of a school in a neighborhood strewn with barbed wire and broken glass. This is an area where children arrive unable to identify colors, let alone letters. An astonishing 41 percent of the school's families move every year and 60 percent of the children come from single-parent homes. In short, Roosevelt has all the makings of a horror story headline school. But since arriving five years ago, principal Charlotte Parker has fired up her staff, muscled the district bureaucrats aside to win more teacher planning time, and taken on the nationally acclaimed "Success for All" reading program. By the 4th grade you can barely tell her kids apart from their suburban counterparts on the TAAS, the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills. Privately, I put the school to the parent test: Would I send my two school-age daughters here? No problem.

Shortly after my visit to Houston, I decided to check out Loyola Catholic Grade School in Denver, which draws on the same inner-city children the Denver public schools are serving so erratically. In exchange for a laughably small annual tuition of $1,950, the children who spend a few years under the strict tutelage of Principal Sister Mary Ellen Roach leave well educated, well disciplined, and motivated. And, yes, they also look great on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills: Loyola third graders, nearly all black, score in the 72nd percentile in math and the fifth graders score in the 76th percentile in reading. Same question: To avoid one of Denver's lousy public schools would I prefer to send my children to a school run by Sister Mary Ellen? Absolutely.

The good work of Charlotte Parker proves the teachers unions right when they say there are good public schools out there. And the equally impressive work of Sister Mary Ellen Roach shows voucher advocates right in saying some children fare better in private schools. There has to be a grand compromise here, a way out of the all-or-nothing voucher debate, a third way that focuses on the inner-city children who need help the most and allows both public and private schools to flourish.

Thanks to New York philanthropist Virginia Gilder, we have a glimpse of a possible grand compromise in Albany's Giffen Memorial Elementary. Located in one of Albany's saddest neighborhoods, practically in the shadow of the state capital, Giffen

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was a mess just a year ago, with unruly, crowded classes where children learned little: Less than a half the third graders were meeting minimum state reading standards.

Here's what Gilder offered the Giffen parents: Choose any private school you wish and I will guarantee tuition up to $2,000 a year. That set off a mad scramble that lasted for months, with the school district crying foul and minority parents debating an offer that smelled suspiciously like right-wing raw meat. It's still too early to draw a final conclusion about the Giffen experiment — or the other voucher programs being funded by philanthropists in urban areas such as Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles. So far 13 children have returned to Giffen, many for disciplinary problems they faced in private schools. And Catholic elementary and middle schools aren't always an option: 40 percent now have waiting lists. But most of the families of the roughly 100 children in the Giffen voucher program appear pleased. "It's wonderful," says Jennifer Davis, whose first-grade son, Brandon, attends St. James Institute, a Catholic elementary school. Not only has Brandon learned to read English, but he's also excited about the Spanish course he takes there. Parents who decided to keep their children at Giffen also have reason to cheer. The Albany school district brought in a vibrant, motivated principal — who sounds a lot like Houston's Charlotte Parker — along with two new assistant principals. The district also transferred seven teachers out of the school, invested $125,000 in fresh materials, established community outreach and literacy programs, and is considering bringing in the highly regarded "Success for All" program to boost reading skills.

Albany school officials, however, are loath to admit the voucher program brought about even a single reform. The most Giffen's new principal, Maxine Fantroy-Ford, will budge on that question is to say, "I think it speeded it up." The seven teachers, says Albany superintendent Lonnie Palmer, were sent to schools with a "less disadvantaged" student population. "We've seen a significant improvement in the disciplinary climate and parental involvement," says Palmer. "We anticipate and hope we will see improvements in test scores in the spring." Like Giffen's principal, Palmer says the voucher offer only speeded up reforms at Giffen: "Because of the media attention we were able to get greater support from the teacher's union and others to make the changes in a more rapid fashion."

But Palmer's actions speak louder than her words. Fighting it all the way, Palmer nonetheless proves the point of the pro-voucher argument. "The theory of the marketplace can even work in public education," says the Hudson Institute's Chester Finn about Giffen. "The school system responded by giving the school a makeover."

Hence the makings of the grand compromise, a limited voucher experiment with dual aims: offer safety valves to academically ambitious inner-city parents and students, while giving school districts a kick-in-the-pants motivation to seek out more Charlotte Parkers from within their ranks. The notion of a grand education compromise isn't new. Former Clinton advisor Bill Galston and education conservative Diane Ravitch have called for a national experiment to test vouchers in several cities. "A lot of low-income parents have reached the end of their patience with the education status quo," says Galston.

An education compromise may seem unlikely, but it's actually less revolutionary than other recent social developments. Only a few years ago conventional wisdom held that welfare reform was unworkable and a decrease in violent crime impossible. Moreover, the pieces of an education compromise are beginning to line up: While the NAACP is sticking with the unions' anti-voucher line, black leaders have to be nervous about the fast rising support for vouchers among black parents. In Denver, where Sister Mary Ellen continues to embarrass Denver school officials with her success record with African-American students, black parents have brought suit to force the city's school system to grant both the vouchers and the transportation needed to get their children to private school. The most recent Phi Delta Kappa poll shows support for vouchers among blacks jumped from 42 to 62 percent in a single year. "We do not normally get a 20-point swing in one year," said one Phi Delta Kappa pollster.

How long can black leaders stand in the way of what black parents want? No one can say, but former Rep. Floyd Flake of New York, who is pro-voucher, claims that "there is an urgency and desperation on the part of parents to not lose another generation of their children." Prominent black columnist William Raspberry, a longtime defender of public schools, announced his decision on May 30 with a column titled "A Reluctant Convert to School Choice." In fact, there's a heated private debate taking place over vouchers among black leaders. Listen to this hint from Urban League President Hugh Price: "If urban schools as we know them continue to fail in the face of all we know about how to improve them, then your customers will be obliged to shop elsewhere for a quality education."

Blacks aren't the only ones joining the grand com-

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promise. Those Democrats who have flourished thanks to the support soccer moms have shown them on education issues have to be worried about recent signs that Republicans have figured out how to turn the education issue in their favor. James Gilmore won the Virginia State House with a campaign vowing to put more teachers in classrooms. And Sen. Al D'Amato's pollsters have selected one big issue to once again win reelection against the odds: vilify the teachers' unions.

Granted, the sight of Senator Pothole posing as the Education Senator is not pretty. But consider this: D'Amato's sure-footed pollsters have a solid history of bailing out their man, so they probably know something that should worry the unions. And it may not be that hard to see. How could anyone miss the recent spectacle of 23,000 families applying for 1,300 private-school scholarships in New York?

Does that mean the teachers' unions might see a limited experiment as a good political compromise? Not likely. The unions can be counted on to call in their last favor with the last state legislator to block even limited voucher experiments. American Federation of Teachers President Sandra Feldman calls the Republican interest in vouchers a "cruel hoax," and she's undoubtedly right that many conservatives are more interested in bashing unions than helping inner-city children. But that was no cruel hoax happening in Sister Mary Ellen Roach's school.

For the moment, forget about the power politics and imagine yourself having to answer this question. An urban mother who has played by all the rules — took her pregnancy seriously, read to her child, enforced discipline, nourished academic interest — comes to you and asks: How can my children learn in these chaotic classrooms? Go ahead, look her in the eye and try to explain this country doesn't owe her child an education.

This grand compromise is not about bashing either teachers or public schools. The sad reality is that there simply aren't enough Charlotte Parkers to go around. While some states, such as Texas, deserve a lot of credit for generating more educators like her, most school districts simply lack the motivation. They need a shot in the arm, and limited voucher programs could be just what the doctor ordered. That's where the compromise kicks in: If Giffen Elementary is any predictor of the future of targeted voucher programs, public schools could end up winners as well. Let's not limit these inner-city voucher programs to the whims of a handful of multimillionaires. Let the public experiments begin.

The Washington Monthly *Journalism Award*

MARCH 1998

MICHAEL MASSING

"Strong Stuff"

The New York Times Magazine

Drinking kills an estimated 400,000 lives a year, compared with 110,000 for smoking. And while smoking's victims tend to be older, liquor kills many people in the prime of their lives. Alcohol is also a factor in many violent crimes, as well as countless driving accidents, but it has a powerful advocate: the liquor lobby. Flush with cash and wise to the lessons of tobacco, the industry has shown an extraordinary ability to cultivate friends in statehouses and in Congress.

BONITA BILLINGSLEY

"Poultry Workers"

News Night Maryland

This program, produced by a Maryland public TV station, looks at the lives of poultry workers, mostly Hispanics from South America, who slave in the refrigerated factories all day long with scarcely any breaks. Many develop carpal tunnel syndrome from the repetitive motion, and injuries from slipping on the wet floors are common. When they get off work, they return to shabby housing where eight people are often crammed into one small apartment. All this for the lowest pay in the food industry. But they can't complain, for fear of losing their jobs and being deported to their home countries.

THE MONTHLY JOURNALISM AWARD is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including two copies of the article or broadcast text) to Monthly Journalism Award, 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009. Nominations for stories run in April are due May 4.

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A Kinder, Gentler Burma

For the right price, Washington lobbyists can put a positive face on the most oppressive foreign junta

BY KEN SILVERSTEIN

DESPITE WHAT MANY PEOPLE THINK, lobbying is hard work. Consider, for instance, the heroic struggles of Jefferson-Waterman International, a D.C.-based firm whose legal efforts on behalf of the Burmese government make president Clinton's legal defense look like a piece of cake. For a mere $400,000 a year, Jefferson-Waterman undertakes to sweeten the reputation of Burma's military junta, the State Law and Order Council — affectionately known as SLORC.

It's not an easy job, as one might infer from recent news stories concerning Burma's political activities. The State Department calls SLORC "a highly authoritarian military regime" whose security forces regularly terrorize the citizenry with extrajudicial killings, torture, and rape. The SLORC keeps Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung Suu Kyi under a state of virtual house arrest and severely restricts her National League for Democracy (NLD) and other opposition parties. (This is necessary since the opposition swept national elections in 1990 with more than 80 percent of the vote, thereby leaving the SLORC no choice but to annul the balloting.) SLORC is also complicit in the drug trade: Burma is the principal source of heroin that reaches American streets.

Now, many PR professionals would fold under the challenge of representing such a colorful client. Not the folks at Jefferson-Waterman. Among the many services its lobbyists — including Ann Wrobleski, who served as assistant secretary of state for narcotics control under Reagan — perform on behalf of the junta, Jefferson-Waterman launched an Internet newsletter, the *Myanmar Monitor*, whose stated purpose "is to provide a broad and balanced view of Burma." To fully appreciate the magnitude of this task, it is helpful to contrast the political and social developments in Burma since last May, when the *Myanmar Monitor* was inaugurated, with how those events were reported in the newsletter.

May - July 1997

Events in Burma:

In May, soldiers detain 36 opposition members and press eight into service as military porters in areas held by ethnic insurgents. One of the opposition members dies as a result. That same month, the SLORC arrests around 50 NLD supporters and detains hundreds more in order to prevent the opposition from gathering at Suu Kyi's home to commemorate the seventh anniversary of its 1990 election victory.

In early June, opposition leader U Tin Shwe dies in Rangoon's notorious Insein prison, where prisoners are routinely subjected to prolonged solitary confinement and otherwise kept in what are called "doggie cells." Later in the month, authorities sentence three opposition members to 10-year jail sentences on trumped up charges of "unlawful association" with foreigners.

The International Labor Organization cites

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Burma for failing to honor internationally recognized worker rights. No surprise here since the SLORC bans free trade unions, tolerates child labor, and uses forced labor to build and maintain infrastructure projects — what the junta calls people's "contributions" to the revolution.

Coverage in the Myanmar Monitor:

In May, the *MM* attacks U.S. sanctions as "short-sighted" and reports that Burma's leaders are "feeling sorry for U.S. companies, which will lose out on future returns from investments." The newsletter also quotes an unnamed British civil engineer residing in Burma as saying that before people "try to punish [the SLORC], they should listen to all sides of the story, not just one, which by the way, has its own agenda and its own spin."

The following month, the *MM* puts out a special edition claiming that a cousin of Suu Kyi had planned to assassinate government leaders and blow up foreign embassies, all with the help of U.S. groups such as the American Refugee Committee and the Center for International Private Enterprise. The SLORC's Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt is quoted as saying that the U.S. government is providing "assistance to underground, armed groups and terrorists groups." *MM* readers wanting to obtain a full text of Khin Nyunt's remarks are urged to call the newsletter's offices.

MM spends much of the period promoting tourism to Burma, which provides the SLORC with badly needed foreign reserves. One story asserts that tourists will encounter a country where "Loving, kindness, sympathy, tolerance, benevolence, mutual regard, respect, and humanitarianism evolve out of Buddha's teachings."

August - October 1997

Events in Burma:

In September, authorities allow the NLD to hold its first party conference since 1990. Soon thereafter, the SLORC again bans opposition gatherings. The state-controlled media steps up its attacks on Suu Kyi, calling her "confrontational" and "uncompromising."

On the world stage, Burma remains an international pariah. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook announces that the country will be banned from the 1998 Asia-Europe meeting in London because "it is one of the few governments in the world whose members are prepared to profit out of the drug trade."

International human rights groups also attack the SLORC. Images Asia issues a detailed report charging that Burmese children as young as 14 are forced to join the army after attending a military-style school called "Brave Young Leaves."

Coverage in the Myanmar Monitor:

In its September 5 issue the *MM* prints a commentary marveling at the way the SLORC has "somehow managed to unify the country, restored social order and brought stability back to the nation."

"Political Reform Marches On," an *MM* headline blares in late October. According to the newsletter, unnamed "international analysts and commentators have noticed a possible easing of tensions" between the SLORC and Suu Kyi. *MM* also dutifully reports that the government's foreign minister believes his country is "enjoying peace and stability, with a dynamic economy and strong social cohesion."

The *MM* continues to zealously promote tourism to Burma. In August, *MM* reports that its editors "have traveled to Myanmar and find its attractions charming." Yet another issue courts the PC crowd with tales of "eco-tourism" in Burma: "Myanmar tourism development will be undertaken with environmental conscientiousness to avoid negative impacts on the natural wilderness."

November 1997 - February 1998

Events in Burma:

In November, the SLORC tries to improve the government's reputation by renaming itself the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Meanwhile, the human rights situation continues to deteriorate. In January, a Buddhist group charges the government with executing three monks and destroying thousands of monasteries during the previous few months. A report from Danish Doctors for Human Rights says that two-thirds of the 125,000 Burmese refugees living in refugee camps in Thailand had been tortured or mistreated by SLORC forces.

The State Department "decertifies" Burma as an ally in the war on drugs for the seventh consecutive year. "Drug money helps keep the Burmese junta afloat, providing cash for hotels, discos and even major infrastructure projects," reports the *Christian Science Monitor* in February.

Coverage in the Myanmar Monitor:

The *MM* portrays the creation of the SPDC as a democratic milestone ranking in importance with the proclamation of the Magna Carta. The story says for-

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mation of the new junta "represents the second phase in the Myanmar Government's three-step development of a full democracy. SLORC represented the first phase of the democratization process." In early January, the *MM* quotes an unnamed foreign diplomat as saying, "Political dialogue is possible if the opposition party gets weaker."

Though the *MM* has repeatedly asserted that U.S. sanctions on Burma have no real impact, it suggests that they be lifted none the less. "I would like to tell my American friends that sanctions will hurt you more than us," the newsletter quotes a government

Who's Who

By Susan Threadgill

Bob Barr, the Republican congressman who last year called for **Bill Clinton**'s impeachment because of the fundraising scandal, has a little problem of his own. The Federal Election Commission says he collected $55,000 in illegal contributions during the 1996 campaign.

Judge **Norma Johnson,** who is supervising **Ken Starr**'s grand jury investigation in Washington, is not known for her friendliness to defense lawyers. In one case she was reprimanded by an appeals court judge for her "impatience" and "irritability" in dealing with a defense attorney she had cited for contempt of court. In another case, the appeals court overturned a conviction because of Johnson's hostility toward the defendant's lawyer, **Robert Weinberg,** a former president of the D.C. bar. During the questioning of two witnesses, according to *The Washington Post*'s **Ruth Marcus,** "she made 65 negative comments to Weinberg, of which 55 were made in the presence of the jury." **William Ginsburg** beware.

One unreported mishap occurred when **Bill Clinton**'s advance team was preparing for a visit to a Ugandan school. The practice helicopter landings blew down a local farmer's house. The farmer was pacified by a promise that the house would be rebuilt.

If you agree that the **Paula Jones** case would never have happened if it hadn't been for **David Brock**'s 1993 article in *The American Spectator* (see "Tilting at Windmills" for an explanation of this theory) then you will be interested to know that, according to **Joe Conason** and **Murray Waas** of *The New York Observer*, Brock was led to the trooper source by a **Newt Gingrich** fundraiser named **Peter W. Smith** to whom he was introduced by a Newt Gingrich strategist named **Eddie Mahe Jr.** Conspiratorialists of the left, please take note.

Here's one for right-wing conspiratorialists: **Harolyn Cardozo**, who was recently summoned before the grand jury to testify about a call she received from **Kathleen Willey** the night of the alleged groping and who is the daughter of **Nathan Landow** who is alleged to have tried to persuade Willey not to talk, is the same Harolyn Cardozo who entertained **Webster Hubbell** and **Vince Foster** the weekend before Foster's suicide.

Speaking of **Hubbell** and **Foster**, there's an intriguing anecdote in Hubbell's book *Friends in High Places* that, possibly because of the book's overall low wattage, has not been widely reported. Hubbell describes Foster's reaction when he learned he was to be accused by a tabloid of having an affair with **Hillary Clinton**: "He was pale, shaking. He could hardly talk. ... By coincidence, Vince's sister **Sheila** was visiting ... I saw him hug her in the hall and take her into his office and close the door. She was probably the one person in the world that he would bare his soul to. I've often wondered what he said to her that day."

As Rep. **Bud Shuster** and his staff were trying to drum up support for the highway spending bill, it was rumored they were bribing congressmen with increases in money for their districts in return for their votes. Such charges are usually hard to prove but columnist **Bob Novak** has found something that bears more than a slight resemblance to a smoking gun. It's a message from a Shuster aide to an aide to Rep. **Tom Coburn**, who was proving hard to persuade: "We had notified you that there was $10 million in the bill for your boss.

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official as saying.

The *MM* responds to criticism of the junta's drug record with a special report on "Narcotics Control in Myanmar." The article points to a vast range of "real achievements" in the junta's supposed anti-drug campaign and concludes that the generals are determined "to eliminate narcotics production."

Although the creativity of Jefferson-Waterman's PR efforts is indeed a marvel, one should also keep in mind that, for just slightly more egregious propagandizing, Tokyo Rose was convicted of war crimes. ●

We're upping that by $5 million, so you have $15 million, and I'm just trying to figure out where you want to put the new money, the new $5 million." The message is, according to Novak, preserved on a voicemail recording.

In **Howie Kurtz**'s new book, *Spin Cycle*, he recites a conversation between *Washington Post* editor **Len Downie** and **Hillary Clinton** that had been agreed to be off-the-record by Downie and Clinton at the time it took place. Some of Kurtz's critics in the press corps are asking why he, as a *Post* employee, was not also bound by Downie's off-the-record pledge.

When **Benjamin Gilman,** the chairman of the House International Relations Committee, took a delegation to Colombia last month to study drugs and terrorism, the delegation chose to do its investigating in Cartagena instead of the country's capital, Bogota, where presumably more information about the danger was available. Could this decision have been related to the fact that Cartagena is one of the loveliest Spanish colonial cities in Latin America? It's also interesting that the delegation, instead of going to Bogota to interview the experts, required the experts to be flown to Cartagena to brief the delegation, which was, according to *The Washington Post*'s **Al Kamen**, staying at the city's best hotel.

David Broder calls the Supreme Court's blunder in letting the **Paula Jones** case proceed

while **Bill Clinton** was still in the White House "one of the dumbest decisions in the long history of the court." But at least one justice deserves a pat on the back for not joining in the court's prediction that the case would be "highly unlikely to occupy any substantial amount" of the President's time. To that **Stephen Breyer** said, "I do not agree."

Is it possible that HUD Secretary **Andrew Cuomo** has inherited one of his father Mario's few unendearing qualities? Cuomo the elder has been known for his tendency to personalize policy disagreements. Which is exactly what we hear his son is doing with his growing dislike for outgoing Fannie Mae chief **Jim Johnson**.

Urging his former boss **Bill Clinton** not to go along with White House stonewallers, **Leon Panetta** recently told **Chris Matthews**, "I think, frankly, being forthright now would turn the odds against **Ken Starr**. He's running high in popularity in the country anyway. If the president of the United States got up and said, 'Look, this is what happened,' to the public, he'd shoot up even higher in the polls because the public would say, 'Thank God, he said what's involved here. Let's move on.'"

Why then doesn't the president come clean? The two reasons we hear most often: fear of hurting **Hillary Clinton**, or fear of angering Hillary Clinton. Another occurs to us. Exactly how would he get beyond saying, "Here's what **Ms. Lewinsky** and I really did"? It's a little hard to figure out words that would both offer a fuller explanation and still be appropriate for a national TV audience.

ART BY ROMAN GENN

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TURNING BOYS INTO GIRLS

How men's magazines are making guys as neurotic, insecure, and obsessive about their appearance as women

BY MICHELLE COTTLE

I LOVE *Men's Health* MAGAZINE. THERE. I'M out of the closet, and I'm not ashamed. Sure, I know what some of you are thinking: What self-respecting '90s woman could embrace a publication that runs such enlightened articles as "Turn Your Good Girl Bad" and "How to Wake Up Next to a One-Night Stand"? Or maybe you'll smile and wink knowingly: What red-blooded hetero chick *wouldn't* love all those glossy photo spreads of buff young beefcake in various states of undress, ripped abs and glutes flexed so tightly you could bounce a check on them? Either way you've got the wrong idea. My affection for *Men's Health* is driven by pure gender politics — by the realization that this magazine, and a handful of others like it, are leveling the playing field in a way that *Ms.* can only dream of. With page after page of bulging biceps and Gillette jaws, robust hairlines and silken skin, *Men's Health* is peddling a standard of male beauty as unforgiving and unrealistic as the female version sold by those dewy-eyed pre-teen waifs draped across the covers of *Glamour* and *Elle*. And with a variety of helpful features on "Foods That Fight Fat," "Banish Your Potbelly," and "Save Your Hair (Before it's Too Late)," *Men's Health* is well on its way to making the male species as insane, insecure, and irrational about physical appearance as any *Cosmo* girl.

Don't you see, ladies? We've been going about this equality business all wrong. Instead of battling to get society fixated on something besides our breast size, we should have been fighting spandex with spandex. Bra burning was a nice gesture, but the greater justice is in convincing our male counterparts that the key to their happiness lies in a pair of made-for-him Super Shaper Briefs with the optional "fly front endowment pad" (as advertised in *Men's Journal*, $29.95 plus shipping and handling). Make the men as neurotic about the circumference of their waists and the whiteness of their smiles as the women, and at least the burden of vanity and self-loathing will be shared by all.

This is precisely what lads' mags like *Men's Health* are accomplishing. The rugged John-Wayne days when men scrubbed their faces with deodorant soap and viewed gray hair and wrinkles as a badge of honor are fading. Last year, international market analyst Euromonitor placed the U.S. men's toiletries market — hair color, skin moisturizer, tooth whiteners, etc. — at $3.5 billion. According to a survey conducted by DYG researchers for *Men's Health* in November 1996, approximately 20 percent of American men get manicures or pedicures, 18 percent use skin treatments such as masks or mud packs, and 10 percent enjoy professional facials. That same month, *Psychology Today* reported that a poll by Roper Starch Worldwide showed that "6 percent of men nationwide actually use such traditionally female products as bronzers and foundation to create the illusion of a youthful appearance."

What men are putting *on* their bodies, however, is nothing compared to what they're doing *to* their bodies: While in the 1980s only an estimated one in 10 plastic surgery patients were men, as of 1996, that ratio had shrunk to one in five. The American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery estimates that nationwide

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more than 690,000 men had cosmetic procedures performed in '96, the most recent year for which figures are available. And we're not just talking "hair restoration" here, though such procedures do command the lion's share of the male market. We're also seeing an increasing number of men shelling out mucho dinero for face peels, liposuction, collagen injections, eyelid lifts, chin tucks, and, of course, the real man's answer to breast implants: penile enlargements (now available to increase both length and diameter).

Granted, *Men's Health* and its journalistic cousins (*Men's Journal*, *Details*, *GQ*, etc.) cannot take all the credit for this breakthrough in gender parity. The fashion and glamour industries have perfected the art of creating consumer "needs," and with the women's market pretty much saturated, men have become the obvious target for the purveyors of everything from lip balm to lycra. Meanwhile, advances in medical science have made cosmetic surgery a quicker, cleaner option for busy executives (just as the tight fiscal leash of managed care is driving more and more doctors toward this cash-based specialty). Don't have several weeks to recover from a full-blown facelift? No problem. For a few hundred bucks you can get a microdermabrasion face peel on your lunch hour.

Then there are the underlying social factors. With women growing ever more financially independent, aspiring suitors are discovering that they must bring more to the table than a well-endowed wallet if they expect to win (and keep) the fair maiden. Nor should we overlook the increased market power of the gay population — in general a more image-conscious lot than straight guys. But perhaps most significant is the ongoing, ungraceful descent into middle age by legions of narcissistic baby boomers. Gone are the days when the elder statesmen of this demographic bulge could see themselves in the relatively youthful faces of those insipid yuppies on "Thirtysomething." Increasingly, boomers are finding they have more in common with the *parents* of today's TV, movie, and sports stars. Everywhere they turn some upstart Gen Xer is flaunting his youthful vitality, threatening boomer dominance on both the social and professional fronts. (Don't think even Hollywood didn't shudder when the Oscar for best original screenplay this year went to a couple of guys barely old enough to shave.) With whippersnappers looking to steal everything from their jobs to their women, post-pubescent men have at long last discovered the terror of losing their springtime radiance.

Whatever combo of factors is feeding the frenzy of male vanity, magazines such as *Men's Health* provide the ideal meeting place for men's insecurities and marketers' greed. Like its more established female counterparts, *Men's Health* is an affordable, efficient delivery vehicle for the message that physical imperfection, age, and an underdeveloped fashion sense are potentially crippling disabilities. And as with women's mags, this cycle of insanity is self-perpetuating: The more men obsess about growing old or unattractive, the more marketers will exploit and expand that fear; the more marketers bombard men with messages about the need to be beautiful, the more they will obsess. Younger and younger men will be sucked into the vortex of self-doubt. Since 1990, *Men's Health* has seen its paid circulation rise from 250,000 to more than 1.5 million; the magazine estimates that half of its 5.3 million readers are under age 35 and 46 percent are married. And while most major magazines have suffered sluggish growth or even a decline in circulation in recent years, during the first half of 1997, *Men's Health* saw its paid circulation increase 14 percent over its '96 figures. (Likewise, its smaller, more outdoorsy relative, Wenner Media's *Men's Journal*, enjoyed an even bigger jump of 26.5 percent.) At this rate, one day soon, that farcical TV commercial featuring men hanging out in bars, whining about having inherited their mothers' thighs will be a reality. Now *that's* progress.

Vanity, Thy Name Is Man

Everyone wants to be considered attractive and desirable. And most of us are aware that, no matter how guilty and shallow we feel about it, there are certain broad cultural norms that define attractive. Not surprisingly, both men's and women's magazines have argued that, far from playing on human insecurities, they are merely helping readers be all that they can be — a kind of training camp for the image impaired. In recent years, such publications have embraced the tenets of "evolutionary biology," which argue that, no matter how often we're told that beauty is only skin deep, men and women are hard-wired to prefer the Jack Kennedys and Sharon Stones to the Rodney Dangerfields and Janet Renos. Continuation of the species demands that specimens with shiny coats, bright eyes, even features, and other visible signs of ruddy good health and fertility automatically kick-start our most basic instinct. Of course, the glamour mags' editors have yet to explain why, in evolutionary terms, we would ever desire adult women to stand 5'10" and weigh 100 pounds. Stories abound of women starving themselves to the point that their bodies shut down and they stop menstruating — hardly conducive to reproduction — yet Kate Moss remains the dish du

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jour and millions of Moss wannabes still struggle to subsist on a diet of Dexatrim and Perrier.

Similarly, despite its title, *Men's Health* is hawking far more than general fitness or a healthful lifestyle. For every half page of advice on how to cut your stress level, there are a dozen pages on how to build your biceps. For every update on the dangers of cholesterol, there are multiple warnings on the horrors of flabby abs. Now, without question, gorging on Cheetos and Budweiser while your rump takes root on the sofa is no way to treat your body if you plan on living past 50. But chugging protein drinks, agonizing over fat grams, and counting the minutes until your next Stairmaster session is equally unbalanced. The line between taking pride in one's physical appearance and being obsessed by it is a fine one — and one that disappeared for many women long ago.

Bra burning was a nice gesture, but the greater justice is in convincing our male counterparts that the key to their happiness lies in a pair of made-for-him Super Shaper Briefs.

Now with the lads' mags taking men in that direction as well, in many cases it's almost impossible to tell whether you're reading a copy of *Men's Health* or of *Mademoiselle*: "April 8. To commemorate Buddha's birthday, hit a Japanese restaurant. Stick to low-fat selections. Choose foods described as *yakimono*, which means grilled," advised the monthly "to do list" in the April *Men's Health*. (Why readers should go Japanese in honor of the most famous religious leader in *India's* history remains unclear.) The January/February list was equally thought provoking: "January 28. It's Chinese New Year, so make a resolution to custom-order your next takeout. Ask that they substitute wonton soup broth for oil. Try the soba noodles instead of plain noodles. They're richer in nutrients and contain much less fat." The issue also featured a "Total Body Workout Poster" and one of those handy little "substitution" charts (loathed by women everywhere), showing men how to slash their calorie intake by making a few minor dietary substitutions: mustard for mayo, popcorn for peanuts, seltzer water for soda, pretzels for potato chips ....

As in women's magazines, fast results with minimum inconvenience is a central theme. Among *Men's Health's* March highlights were a guide to "Bigger Biceps in 2 Weeks," and "20 Fast Fixes" for a bad diet; April offered "A Better Body in Half the Time," along with a colorful four-page spread on "50 Snacks That Won't Make You Fat." And you can forget carrot sticks — this think-thin eating guide celebrated the wonders of Reduced Fat Cheez-its, Munch 'Ems, Fiddle Faddle, Oreos, Teddy Grahams, Milky Ways, Bugles, Starburst Fruit Twists, and Klondike's Fat Free Big Bear Ice Cream Sandwiches. Better nutrition is not the primary issue. A better butt is. To this end, also found in the pages of *Men's Health* is the occasional, tasteful ad for liposuction — just in case nature doesn't cooperate.

But a blueprint to rock-hard buns is only part of what makes *Men's Health* the preeminent "men's lifestyle" magazine. Nice teeth, nice skin, nice hair, and a red-hot wardrobe are now required to round out the ultimate alpha male package, and *Men's Health* is there to help on all fronts. In recent months it has run articles on how to select, among other items, the perfect necktie and belt, the hippest wallet, the chicest running gear, the best "hair-thickening" shampoo, and the cutest golfing apparel. It has also offered advice on how to retard baldness, how to keep your footwear looking sharp, how to achieve different "looks" with a patterned blazer, even how to keep your lips from chapping at the dentist's office: "[B]efore you start all that 'rinse and spit' business, apply some moisturizer to your face and some lip balm to your lips. Your face and lips won't have that stretched-out dry feeling ... Plus, you'll look positively radiant!"

While a desire to look good for their hygienists may be enough to spur some men to heed the magazine's advice (and keep 'em coming back for more), fear and insecurity about the alternatives are generally more effective motivators. For those who don't get with the *Men's Health* program, there must be the threat of ridicule. By far the least subtle example of this is the free subscriptions for "guys who need our help" periodically announced in the front section of the magazine. April's dubious honoree was actor Christopher Walken:

> Chris, we love the way you've perfected that psycho persona. But now you're taking

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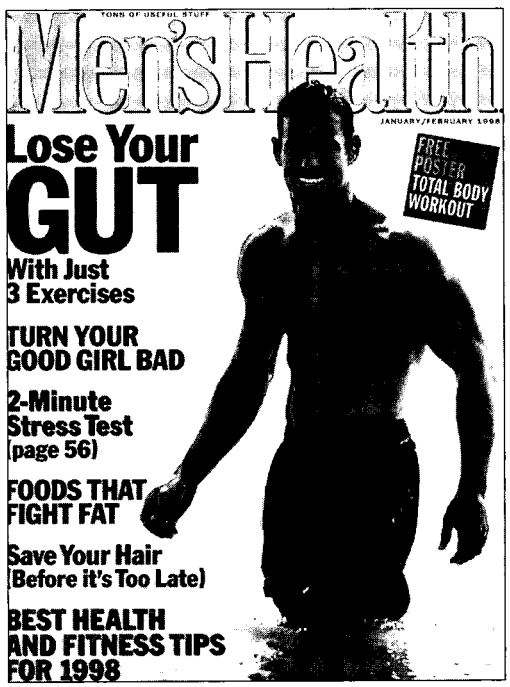
your role in "Things to do in Denver When You're Dead" way too seriously with that ghostly pale face, the "where's the funeral?" black clothes, and a haircut that looks like the work of a hasty undertaker. ... Dab on a little Murad Murasun Self-Tanner ($21) ... For those creases in your face, try Ortho Dermatologicals' Renova, a prescription anti-wrinkle cream that contains tretinoin, a form of vitamin A. Then, find a barber.

Or how about the March "winner," basketball coach Bobby Knight: "Bob, your trademark red sweater is just a billboard for your potbelly. A darker solid color would make you look slimmer. Also, see 'The Tale of Two Bellies' in our February 1998 issue, and try to drop a few pounds. Then the next time you throw a sideline tantrum, at least people won't say, 'look at the crazy *fat* man.'"



Just as intense as the obsession with appearance that men's (and women's) magazines breed are the sexual neuroses they feed. And if one of the ostensible goals of women's mags is to help women drive men wild, what is the obvious corollary objective for men's magazines? To get guys laid — well and often. As if men needed any encouragement to fixate on the subject, *Men's Health* is chock full of helpful "how-tos" such as, "Have Great Sex Every Day Until You Die" and "What I Learned From My Sex Coach," as well as more cursory explorations of why men with larger testicles have more sex ("Why Big Boys Don't Cry"), how to maintain orgasm intensity as you age ("Be one of the geysers"), and how to achieve stronger erections by eating certain foods ("Bean counters make better lovers"). And for those having trouble even getting to the starting line, last month's issue offered readers a chance to "Win free love lessons."

The High Price of Perfection

Having elevated men's physical and sexual insecurities to the level of grand paranoia, lads' mags can then get down to what really matters: moving merchandise. On the cover of *Men's Health* each month, in small type just above the magazine's title, appears the phrase "Tons of useful stuff." Thumbing through an issue or two, however, one quickly realizes that a more accurate description would read: "Tons of expensive stuff." They're all there: Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Paul Mitchell, Calvin Klein, Clinique, Armani, Versace, Burberrys, Nautica, Nike, Omega, Rogaine, The Better Sex Video Series .... The magazine even has those annoying little perfume strips guaranteed to make your nose run and to alienate everyone within a five-mile radius of you.

Masters of psychology, marketers wheel out their sexiest pitches and hottest male models to tempt/intimidate the readership of *Men's Health*. Not since the last casting call for "Baywatch" has a more impressive display of firm, tanned, young flesh appeared in one spot. And just like in women's magazines, the articles themselves are designed to sell stuff. All those helpful tips on choosing blazers, ties, and belts come complete with info on the who, where, and how much. The strategy is brilliant: Make men understand exactly how far short of the ideal they fall, and they too become vulnerable to the lure of high-priced underwear, cologne, running shoes, workout gear, hair dye, hair strengthener, skin softener, body-fat monitors, suits, boots, energy bars, and sex aids. As Mark Jannot, the grooming and health editor for *Men's Journal*, told "Today" show host Matt Lauer in January, "This is a huge, booming market. I mean, the marketers have found a group of people that are ripe for the picking. Men are finally learning that aging is a disease." Considering how effectively *Men's Health* fosters this belief, it's hardly surprising that the magazine has seen its ad pages grow 510 percent since 1991 and has made it onto *Adweek's* 10 Hottest Magazines list three of the last five years.

To make all this "girly" image obsession palatable to their audience, lads' mags employ all their creative energies to transform appearance issues into "a guy thing." *Men's Health* tries to cultivate a joking, macho tone throughout ("Eat Like Brando and Look Like

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Rambo" or "Is my tallywhacker shrinking?") and tosses in a handful of Y-chromosome teasers such as "How to Stay Out of Jail," "How to Clean Your Whole Apartment in One Hour or Less," and my personal favorite, "Let's Play Squash," an illustrated guide to identifying the bug-splat patterns on your windshield. Instead of a regular advice columnist, which would smack too much of chicks' magazines, *Men's Health* recently introduced "Jimmy the Bartender," a monthly column on "women, sex, and other stuff that screws up men's lives."

It appears that, no matter how much clarifying lotion and hair gel you're trying to sell them, men must never suspect that you think they share women's insecurities. If you want a man to buy wrinkle cream, marketers have learned, you better pitch it as part of a comfortingly macho shaving regimen. Aramis, for example, assures men that its popular Lift Off! Moisture Formula with alpha hydroxy will help cut their shave time by one-third. "The biggest challenge for products started for women is how to transfer them to men," explained George Schaeffer, the president of OPI cosmetics, in the November issue of *Soap-Cosmetics-Chemical Specialties*. Schaeffer's Los Angeles-based company is the maker of Matte Nail Envy, an unobtrusive nail polish that's proved a hit with men. And for the more adventuresome shopper, last year Hard Candy cosmetics introduced a line of men's nail enamel, called Candy Man, that targets guys with such studly colors as Gigolo (metallic black) and Testosterone (gunmetal silver).

On a larger scale, positioning a makeover or trip to the liposuction clinic as a smart career move seems to help men rationalize their image obsession. "Whatever a man's cosmetic shortcoming, it's apt to be a career liability," noted Alan Farnham in a September 1996 issue of *Fortune*. "The business world is prejudiced against the ugly." Or how about *Forbes*' sad attempt to differentiate between male and female vanity in its Dec. 1 piece on cosmetic surgery: "Plastic surgery is more of a cosmetic thing for women. They have a thing about aging. For men it's an investment that pays a pretty good dividend." Whatever you say, guys.

The irony is rich and bittersweet. Gender equity is at last headed our way — not in the form of women being less obsessed with looking like Calvin Klein models, but of men becoming hysterical over the first signs of crows feet. Gradually, guys are no longer pumping up and primping simply to get babes, but because they feel it's something everyone expects them to do. Women, after all, do not spend $400 on Dolce & Gabbana sandals to impress their boyfriends, most of whom don't know Dolce & Gabbana from Beavis & Butthead (yet). They buy them to impress other women — and because that's what society says they should want to do. Most guys haven't yet achieved this level of insanity, but with grown men catcalling the skin tone and wardrobe of other grown men (Christopher Walken, Bobby Knight) for a readership of still more grown men, can the gender's complete surrender to the vanity industry be far behind?

The ad for *Men's Health's* web site says it all: "Don't click here unless you want to look a decade younger ... lose that beer belly ... be a better lover ... and more! Men's Health Online: The Internet Site For Regular Guys." Of course, between the magazine's covers there's not a "regular guy" to be found, save for the occasional snapshot of one of the publication's writers or editors — usually taken from a respectable distance. The moist young bucks in the Gap jeans ads and the electric-eyed Armani models have exactly as much in common with the average American man as Tyra Banks does with the average American woman. Which would be fine, if everyone seemed to understand this distinction. Until they do, however, I guess my consolation will have to be the image of thousands of once-proud men, having long scorned women's insecurities, lining up for their laser peels and trying to squeeze their middle-aged asses into a snug set of Super Shaper Briefs — with the optional fly front endowment pad, naturally.

The *Monthly* is seeking applicants for an editor/reporter position that will be available in August. Candidates should send a cover letter, resumé, and writing samples (not necesarily published, but showing fact-gathering and analytic ability) to:

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The Lives Behind the Dream

Remembering the foot soldiers of the civil rights movement

By Jon Meacham

WALKING WITH THE WIND:
A Memoir of the Movement
By John Lewis with Michael D'Orso
Simon & Schuster, $25
and
THE CHILDREN
By David Halberstam
Random House, $29.95

JOHN LEWIS STILL CAN'T remember how he got back to the church. The march had begun at Brown's Chapel, in Selma, Ala., just before 4 p.m. on March 7, 1965. Martin Luther King Jr. had been held up in Atlanta. Lewis, the young chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, was to lead the 600 well-dressed marchers who had gathered to protest Alabama's systemic refusal to allow blacks to register to vote. Though billed as a pilgrimage to Montgomery, the crowd didn't really expect to get to the state capital, which was 54 miles away down U.S. Highway 80; Lewis wore dress shoes and a light tan raincoat over a suit and tie. "Like everyone around me," Lewis writes in his moving new book, *Walking with the Wind*, "I was basically playing it by ear." Finally they set out down Water Street, then turned right and walked along the Alabama River to the base of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. It was steep, and Lewis noticed a light breeze as he and Hosea Williams reached the crest of the bridge. "There, facing us at the bottom of the other side, stood a sea of white-helmeted, blue-uniformed Alabama state troopers, line after line of them, dozens of battle-ready lawmen . . . ." As the marchers made their way down to the bottom of the bridge, toward the troopers, Lewis noticed several officers slipping on gas masks. Fifty feet from the line, he watched Major John Cloud put a bullhorn to his lips and bark, "*This is an unlawful assembly. Your march is not conducive to the public safety. You are ordered to disperse . . . . You have two minutes to turn around and go back to your church.*" Lewis turned to Williams: "We should kneel and pray." But one minute after Cloud's warning — not two, Lewis noted as he glanced at his watch — the major lost patience and cried, "*Troopers, advance.*" Lewis saw blue shirts, billy clubs, and bullwhips; he heard the hoofbeats of horses, the clunk of police-issue boots, the rebel yells. Then he felt the club come crashing down on the left side of his head and smelled the tear gas as he faded out.

Just after 9:30 that night, the nation tuned in. Lewis was in a Selma hospital, his skull fractured and raincoat soaked with blood, unable to recall the retreat from the bridge to safety at Brown's Chapel. ABC interrupted its Sunday night movie to play the footage of the attack. Anchor Frank Reynolds let the film speak for itself: For 15 minutes, the country watched Cloud, Sheriff Jim Clark, and their deputies beat the marchers; at one point, Clark's voice could be heard shouting, "Get those goddamned niggers!" Within a week, President Lyndon Johnson had summoned George Wallace to the White House. When the meeting broke up, LBJ announced he was sending voting-rights legislation to Congress. The next day — just 10 days after "Bloody Sunday" — Johnson gave perhaps the most memorable speech of his career: "At times history and fate meet at a single time in a single place to shape a turning point in man's unending search for freedom," he told Congress and 70 million Americans watching on television. "So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama . . . . Their cause must be our cause, too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we *shall* overcome."

JON MEACHAM, *a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly, *is* Newsweek's *national affairs editor.*

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The Road to Selma

It is a powerful tale. From Montgomery to Memphis, the touchstones of the sepia-toned saga of the civil rights movement are familiar. On December 5, 1955, on a bus in the Alabama capital, a tired seamstress named Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white person; a young minister in town, Martin Luther King Jr., took up her cause and laid siege to Jim Crow. The white South resisted with fire hoses and police dogs; brave blacks, many of them schoolchildren, many more barely in their twenties, courageously — and nonviolently — walked the line until, finally, Johnson signed the watershed civil and voting rights acts in 1964 and 1965. It was, it seems now, a clean kill in a Manichean struggle between light and dark, a warm civic fairy story.

But the truth, as always, is more complicated than legend. Two new books — Lewis' excellent memoir and David Halberstam's sweeping *The Children* — remind us that the movement's success was in fact far from inevitable and that the forces behind it were, in the beginning, quite ordinary people. They were caught up in extraordinary times, of course, but the men and women who made the movement were not born saints and martyrs: They were, at first, just like anybody else. Halberstam understands this: "We are a bunch of children," muses Diane Nash, then 21, the evening before the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins began in early 1960. "We're nice children, bright and idealistic, but we are children and we are weak. We have no police force, no judges, no cops, no money." Years later, Nash made an even larger point in a conversation with historian David J. Garrow: "If people think that it was Martin Luther King's movement, then today they — young people — are more likely to say, 'Gosh, I wish we had a Martin Luther King here today to lead us.' ... If people knew how that movement started, then the question they would ask themselves is, 'What can I do?'"

PHOTO COURTESY OF UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

March 25, 1960: A student stages a one-man sit-in at a Nashville lunch counter.

Lewis' answer to that question is rooted in his childhood. One of the surprising virtues of his memoir is his portrait of growing up poor and black in the rural Alabama of the 1940s. Lewis, now a congressman from Atlanta, was born on a farm in Pike County: Until he was six years old, he had seen just two white people in his whole life — the mailman and a traveling salesman. The son of sharecroppers (his parents lovingly called each other "Shorty" and "Sugarfoot" when nobody else was around), Lewis describes the back-breaking toil of farming in those days. "You had to bend down to pick cotton," he remembers. "Eight to ten hours of stooping like that and your back would be on fire. It would ache all night, and still be aching when you got up the next morning to go out and do it all over again." But Lewis was always a different kind of child — and he did not come from a typical rural black family. His father struggled with debt, but worked hard enough farming and driving a school bus to buy his family a house. His uncle took Lewis on a trip to Buffalo when the youngster was 11, giving him a glimpse of middle-class black life beyond the reach of Jim Crow. Then there were the chickens: Lewis was devoted to the farm's poultry population. He preached to them, performed chicken baptisms, and staged elaborate chicken funerals: "The kinship I felt with these other living creatures, the closeness, the compassion, is a feeling I carried with me out into the world from that point on."

Lewis dreamed of going to Morehouse like King, but there was not enough money. He ended up instead at American Baptist Seminary in Nashville, a tiny impoverished school where he first encountered Gandhian teachings about nonviolence. After a year there, he contacted King and Ralph Abernathy about his integrating Troy State, an Alabama school near where he grew up, but his parents — worried about retribution in those early, violent days of the movement — talked him out of it. Soon, however, Jim Lawson, a charismatic Gandhian in Nashville, fueled Lewis' fire, and the sit-ins to integrate the city's lunch counters were launched. Then came the Freedom Rides, the founding of SNCC, Birmingham, and Selma.

Behind the epic moments, though, there was deep uncertainty — and always fear. One anecdote makes the point perfectly: One night in 1961 during the Free-

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dom Rides — the movement's attempt to integrate interstate bus travel — Lewis and his colleagues were pulled from the Birmingham jail to take a surrealistic ride with Bull Connor. The segregationist Birmingham chief told them he was going to take them back to Nashville where, he said, "you belong." He chatted amiably enough with the seven Riders as they rolled up through northern Alabama; one, Katherine Burke, suggested Connor breakfast with them at the Fisk cafeteria when they got to Nashville. The chief said it would be his pleasure. Then, as they approached the Tennessee line, near a town called Ardmore, Connor's tone shifted: "This is where you'll be gettin' out," he said as his officers rousted the Riders out onto the highway. "You all can catch a train home from here," Connor said, gesturing toward a darkened depot. "Or maybe," he added with a chuckle, "a bus." Lewis wasn't laughing: "This was Klan territory," he writes. "We knew that." There was nothing but moonlight and terror. Lewis knew the rough outlines of the terrain. "There was not much chance that any of the homes we could see had black people living in them. Little towns like this were where the white people lived; you had to go out into the surrounding countryside to find the homes of the blacks." So they did, finding a weather-beaten shack. They knocked; an elderly black man — looking "sad and scared," Lewis says — refused to let them in. His wife came to the door and relented. In the morning the old man went into Ardmore and cannily bought eggs, bologna, bread, and cheese at several different stores; one large purchase at a single shop would have been suspicious.

"If people think it was King's movement, they are likely to say, 'I wish we had him here today to lead us.' If people knew how the movement started, then they would ask, 'What can I do?'"

And so a revolution was made — not just in famous footage but in the piney woods of a long-forgotten world. Lewis' book is both a lesson in how the movement really worked and a clear-eyed explanation of why it fell apart, particularly after 1968. Lewis dates the beginning of the end from the Freedom Rides: The confrontation of those heady days attracted increasingly radical blacks like Stokely Carmichael who believed the future belonged to the violent. In 1965 the carnage at the Pettus Bridge moved a nation; yet within some black quarters, Lewis reports, he was dismissed as a "Christ-loving fool" and an "anachronism." Things only got worse: There was Memphis, then Los Angeles. Lewis was working for RFK, and was in the senator's room at the Ambassador waiting for him to return from his victory speech. As he watched televised images of Kennedy dying on the floor of the hotel kitchen, the Dream, it seemed, had turned dark.

Keeping the Faith

Charting the arc of the movement is the unexpected strength of Halberstam's vast history. As a young journalist in Nashville in the early 1960s, he was *The Tennessean*'s principal reporter on the story of the sit-ins. Halberstam's portrait of Nashville in those years is masterful. He explains how Tennessee was essentially a border state — the last out and first back in during the Civil War — where race-baiting politicians did not fare well, even as neighbors like Faubus of Arkansas, Barnett of Mississippi, and Wallace of Alabama survived on segregationist bile. His recreations of the sit-ins and the Freedom Rides are classic Halberstam: bold, opinionated, authoritative. (The narrative can be occasionally unwieldy, but then so was the movement.) To his credit, he mines intriguing detail from episodes that seemed to have been exhausted long ago. One example: When John Seigenthaler, the Kennedys' personal emissary, confronted Alabama Gov. John Patterson about protecting the Freedom Riders, the segregationist pol refused and theatrically turned to his own public safety commissioner, an unassuming figure named Floyd Mann, to back him up. "Tell him, Floyd," Patterson said. "Governor," Mann replied, "If you tell me to protect these people, then I'll protect them." The room went quiet. Mann went on to outline his plan and, when riots later broke out in Montgomery, it was Mann who saved John Lewis' life.

Perhaps the most telling section of Halberstam's three-tiered work is neither "The Children" (about Nashville) nor "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" (about the Freedom Rides) but the final part — "Coming Home." In it he traces the disparate paths of the children in the years since the movement, and in their successes and failures we see how the movement's triumphs created their own tensions. Lewis becomes a congressman, but has to run an ultimately divisive

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campaign against his old comrade in arms, Julian Bond. James Bevel divorces Diane Nash and drifts into the political netherworld, becoming both a LaRouchite and a counselor to Farrakhan. Marion Barry rises and falls and rises (sort of) again, his city sabotaged by his appetites and addictions. Others made millions and moved into the upper-middle class, or beyond; still others slipped out of sight. One thing was universal: The clarity of those days could never be recovered, and as terrible as they were, they were also, on some level, exhilarating. Once the enemy shifted from Jim Crow and Jim Clark to poverty, the fight became harder, the drama impossible to sustain. Halberstam skillfully explains why, and paints a panorama not just of a vast movement but of the quiet lives that drove it.

Lewis knows how far we've come — and senses how far we have to go. "No one, but no one, who was born in America forty or fifty or sixty years ago and who grew up and came through what I came through, who witnessed the changes I witnessed, can possibly say that America is not a far better place than it was." In the House, he has basically stayed the liberal course, opposing the gulf war and supporting the Clintonian position of "mend it, don't end it" on affirmative action. But to his credit, Lewis has stayed the integrationist course as well, remaining faithful to the spirit of the March on Washington in a world more interested in Malcolm than in Martin. He understands, too, that the ground on which liberalism must fight now includes class as well as race: "There hasn't been a time in America — certainly not since World War II — that the classes have been pushed as far apart as they are today." He's right, and solutions will only result from the kind of interracial effort that characterized the movement of the 1950s and early 1960s, not the separatism that became so fashionable in the late '60s.

We may never recapture the drama of those days, but the wars ahead — closing the class gap, fixing the nation's schools, rescuing the inner cities — are not unwinnable. The movement's victories were not foreordained either, and much of the hard work unfolded far from the camera's eye, in places where Kennedys and Kings never visited. Lewis remembers this: "What tends to be forgotten among the dramatic photographs and news accounts of the moments of violence ... were the days and days of uneventful protest that took place outside courtrooms and jails. People silently walked a picket line for hours on end, or sang freedom songs from dawn to dusk, or simply stood in line at a door they knew would not be opened, hour after hour, day after day." But the doors did ultimately open — and may again.

A Man Obsessed

LBJ was passionate, possessed — and one of the most complex men of our times

By Charles W. Bailey

FLAWED GIANT:
Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973
By Robert Dallek
Oxford University Press, $35

Two scenes in the White House, 1968: An evening in April. Lyndon Johnson has invited Nelson Rockefeller and his wife to the executive mansion. Three weeks earlier, Johnson had announced he would not run for re-election. Now, over dinner in the family quarters, the president — dissatisfied with all the Democratic candidates hoping to succeed him — urges Rockefeller to go after the Republican nomination. Johnson tells the New York governor that he would never campaign against him because "you've been a longtime friend."

Fast-forward to Sept. 15 of the same year. The White House visitor now is evangelist Billy Graham, bearing a gift in the form of a memorandum from Richard Nixon. Nixon, having easily crushed Rockefeller's late-blooming candidacy, wants to further chill Johnson's already lukewarm support for Hubert Humphrey. The memo, hand-written by Graham from Nixon's dictation, oozes flattery:

"1) ... [I] would never embarrass him after the election. I respect him as a man and as the president. He is the hardest working and most dedicated presi-

Charles W. Bailey, *a former Washington correspondent for* The Minneapolis Tribune, *is a member of the editorial advisory board of* The Washington Monthly.

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dent in 140 years.

"2) I want a working relationship with him ... and will seek his advice continually.

"3) Want you [President Johnson] to go on special assignments after the election, perhaps to foreign countries.

"4) I must point out some of the weaknesses and failures of the administration. But will never reflect on Mr. Johnson personally.

"5) When Vietnam is settled he [Nixon] will give you [President Johnson] a major share of credit — because you ... deserve it.

"6) Will do everything to make you ... a place in history because you deserve it."

Graham goes over the Nixon memo with Johnson. He later recalls that "the president asked me to read these points twice. Then he took the paper from my hand and studied it for a moment but I could see he was having difficulty reading my writing. He then said, 'Let me give you answers point by point.' The substance of his answers were warm appreciation. He said, 'I intend to loyally support Mr. Humphrey, but if Mr. Nixon becomes president-elect, I will do all in my power to cooperate with him.'"

Robert Dallek's *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* provides much fascinating detail — including an assertion by some Humphrey aides that Johnson had Humphrey's telephones tapped during the 1968 campaign. But though the book is rich in anecdote, it is much more: It is in fact the best balanced and most thorough account produced, or likely to be produced, about the ill-starred Johnson administration. (*Flawed Giant* is the second part of a two-volume biography. The first, *Lone Star Rising*, dealt with Johnson's early life and congressional career.)

The central theme running through the book, as it ran through the Johnson presidency, is the parallel development of the two major issues that preoccupied Johnson in his five years as president — The Great Society and Vietnam. The first was Johnson's great dream; the other, his worst nightmare. One proved his great strength and expertise as a domestic political legislative leader; the other exposed his gravest shortcomings as a diplomatic and military strategist. The Great Society program slowed and ultimately came to a dead stop as the Vietnam war grew and grew until it finally shattered the entire administration.

All this Dallek reports authoritatively and in great detail so that the reader cannot fail to see how these two issues became intertwined in mortal embrace. The result is a masterful account of both issues. At the end, Dallek offers his own judgment. On the Great Society: "Like FDR's New Deal, Johnson's poverty war and reach for a Great Society may seem somewhat outdated or inadequate to current challenges, but the humanizing force behind them abides and gives both men historical standing as visionaries who helped advance the national well-being and fulfill the promise of American life ...." And on Vietnam: "The principal products of administration discussions about the fighting were false hopes, self-generated illusions, and paranoid fears of domestic opponents, who were not the communist dupes Johnson believed them to be but men and women as devoted to the national security and well-being as anyone in the government and military."

One consistent theme running throughout the book is Johnson's obsessive contempt for the press. "Reporters are puppets," he told historian Doris Kearns. "They simply respond to the pull of the most powerful strings. ... Every story is always slanted to win the favor of someone who sits somewhere higher up. There is no such thing as an objective story." Johnson and his aides lived by that rule, feeding inside dope to reporters they thought were friendly — and trying to freeze out or intimidate those who were considered hostile. Reporters regularly assigned to cover Johnson (myself included) were of course aware of his extreme sensitivity to anything written or broadcast about him. But we had no idea of the depth of his rage and the strength of his obsession on the subject. Particularly on Vietnam, he played hardball, referring to reporters who wrote stories he did not like as "communists" who were unpatriotic and endangering "national security." He proposed to have a *New York Times* reporter expelled from Vietnam after he wrote an article saying the war was a "stalemate" in mid-1967. Johnson also suggested imposing censorship on news dispatches from Vietnam. Fortunately for his reputation — and his country — other officials talked him out of both moves.

Dallek spent seven years researching and writing this book, but he does not claim to fully understand his subject. He cites Russell Baker's comment that Johnson was "a human puzzle so complicated that nobody could ever understand it." Dallek seems to agree. "It may be that future biographers will have superior methods for deciphering a man of such uncommon ambition, capacity, and energy," he writes. "But whether they do or not, it is difficult to believe that they will ever fully agree on how to assess this larger-than-life figure. ... Johnson was one of those great success stories posing the question: Did he reach such great heights and ultimately fall so far because of or despite his inner demons?"

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Race and Reason

Moving beyond demagogues toward a color-blind society

By Michael Lind

THE COLOR BIND: California's Battle to End Affirmative Action
By Lydia Chavez
University of California Press, $40

and

MAKING RACE AND NATION: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil
By Anthony W. Marx
Cambridge University Press, $29.95

IN RECENT YEARS, CALIFORNIA's system of voter initiatives — originally designed by progressive reformers as a way to circumvent lobby-dominated legislatures — has unexpectedly become a surrogate for national debates about taxes, immigration, and race. In *The Color Bind*, Lydia Chavez, a professor of journalism at UC Berkeley, has provided a fascinating and objective account of Proposition 209, the California Civil Rights Initiative. Passed in 1996, Prop 209 echoes the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in attempting to outlaw discrimination or the granting of preferences by the State of California on the basis of "race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin."

Chavez treats all sides in the controversy with detachment and fairness. The initiative originated with two white academics, Glynn Custred and Thomas E. Wood, who had grown frustrated with an academic world dominated by those who wanted to promote diversity in hiring, by discriminating against whites if necessary. The extremes to which the logic of racial preferences was being taken became apparent when Assembly Speaker Willie Brown introduced a measure (vetoed by Governor Wilson) which called for "enhanced success at all educational levels so that there are similar achievement patterns among all groups regardless of ethnic origin, race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstance." If taken seriously, this would appear to require that physics degrees be awarded to Scots-Irish in proportion to their percentage of the population.

It was easy to make a case that this kind of measure violated the basic ideals of American liberalism. Unfortunately, by the early 1990s liberalism had become entirely identified with support for affirmative action, defined not as outreach but as the promotion of less-qualified members of favored groups over more-qualified white men. No bipartisan coalition of race-neutral liberals and conservatives materialized. Instead, the initiative drafted by Custred and Wood was promoted by conservative Republicans seeking to capitalize on resentment of affirmative action by white men (in California at the time of the vote, whites were only 52.8 percent of the population but accounted for 88 percent of registered voters). While presidential candidates Clinton and Dole skirted the issue for fear of offending one group or another, the debate quickly polarized, with the most ardent supporters of Prop 209 found among conservatives like William Rusher, the former publisher of National Review, and its most determined opponents among veteran left-wing activists, many of them from the San Francisco Bay Area. Ads in favor of Prop 209 featured horror stories about reverse discrimination. The worst demagogues, however, were the leftist opponents of the measure, who ran an ad linking Prop 209 to David Duke. According to Chavez, "It began and ended with burning crosses and Klan regalia." The attempt to vilify supporters of Prop 209 as racists was rendered absurd by the fact that Ward Connerly, a prominent black ally of Gov. Pete Wilson who as a regent supported the abolition of racial preferences in the University of California System, strongly supported the measure. The passage of Prop 209 with white votes alone showed that its proponents had failed to persuade nonwhite citizens that racial preferences were unjust. On the other hand, the racially polarized vote lent credibility to those who claim that affirmative action is merely a corrupt spoils system. The only groups that voted against Prop 209 were those whose members sought to gain special treat-

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ment because of their race.

The case for racial preferences of the kind targeted by Prop 209 rests on two assumptions, neither of which are convincing. The first is that race is an objective biological category, rather than an arbitrary social convention. The second assumption is that public policy should be based on the assumption that inequities between white and nonwhite groups are chiefly caused by contemporary white racism (rather than, say, by the class differences resulting from segregation, or the linguistic and cultural disadvantages of unassimilated immigrant groups).

The premise that race is a fact of nature rather than a fluid social category collapses once the racial policies of the U.S. and other countries with multiracial populations are compared and contrasted. In *Making Race and Nation*, Anthony W. Marx, a political scientist at Columbia University, compares the different ways that political elites have manipulated conceptions of race in the United States, South Africa, and Brazil in pursuing alternate paths to nation-building. In all three countries, post-colonial political elites were faced with the problem of creating some kind of coherent national community from a diverse population that included Europeans, Africans, and a substantial number of people of mixed descent. The United States and South Africa chose versions of white nationalism, limiting participation in the "nation" to people of exclusively European descent. The dividing line was sharpest in the United States, where the "one-drop" rule, defining as black anyone with even "one drop" of African "blood," effectively eliminated the mixed-race mulatto category. In South Africa, by contrast, "Coloureds" and "Africans" were distinguished, although both were victims of discrimination by the white-supremacist regime.

The Brazilian elite chose a radically different strategy, defining Brazil as a "racial democracy" in which race did not matter. Marx argues that the myth of racial democracy did not alter the fact that Afro-Brazilians remained at the bottom of a class system in which the upper levels were monopolized by white Brazilians. What is more, by denying Afro-Brazilians a separate identity, the idea of racial democracy made it less likely that black Brazilians would mobilize as a distinct political group, as black Americans have done.

Indeed, Marx suggests that strict and somewhat arbitrary definitions of race may be favored for strategic reasons by nonwhites as well as whites. "The recent rise of separatist black identity reflects not only black disillusionment with white America, but also a collective black interest in defining and asserting a category no longer imposed by the state," Marx writes. During the recent debate over the addition of a multiracial category to the U.S. Census form, the chief opposition came from the traditional black civil rights establishment, which fears losing constituents if Americans with only limited African ancestry cease to be identified as black. Ironically, the "one-drop" rule devised by American white supremacists is now employed to promote a strategy of black solidarity. This strategy arguably serves middle-class blacks, who are the chief beneficiaries of race-based affirmative action in education and contracting, more than it helps poor and working-class blacks, whose interests might best be served by need-based social programs benefiting low-income whites as well. In order to preserve affirmative action for blacks, the black civil rights community has had to support affirmative action for Hispanic and Asian immigrants without regard for income and — even less justifiably — has supported gender-based preferences for affluent white women.

In light of these considerations, a growing number of progressives are coming to the conclusion that the whole arbitrary system of racial labels as well as racial preferences ought to be scrapped in favor of a genuinely liberal approach that combines race-neutral policy with affirmative government on behalf of the disadvantaged of all backgrounds. Unfortunately, the controversy over Prop 209 shows that the sensible middle way is likely to turn into a deserted, cratered no-man's-land in the political trench war between the demagogues of the right and the demagogues of the left. ●

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OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

A STATEMENT BY UNIDAD CUBANA

"There is a limit to the tears shed over the graves of the dead,
and that is the infinite love of the Country that is sworn over their dead bodies." — José Martí

Unidad Cubana publicly reaffirms the position it has been stating since its foundation on July 12, 1991, at Miami's Dade County Auditorium, when nearly all of the organizations and umbrella groups of Cuban exiles agreed that the only solution to the Cuban crisis was to face up to and overthrow the Castro regime.

Therefore, in view of the confusion that some of the exile organizations have created by changing this stand, Unidad Cubana, made up of dozens of organizations, reaffirms:

1) That in Cuba nothing has changed to justify trying to alter or change the policy on which Unidad Cubana labored along with other organizations and with our Congressmen in Washington, D.C., for the passing of the Helms-Burton Act.

2) That Unidad Cubana expresses that, in essence, nothing has changed in Cuba after the Pope's visit, even though some of those who seek an "understanding" with the Communist tyranny claim otherwise in order to weaken the U.S. embargo and create a false notion about the nature of the Castro regime.

3) That we continue to wholeheartedly support our Members of Congress, Ilenna Ros-Lehtinen, Lincoln Díaz-Balart, and Bob Menéndez, whom we consider our voices in Washington, D.C., and to whom, therefore, we offer all the cooperation they need and is within our means to continue their patriotic struggle.

4) That we do not accept a solution based on the so-called "socialist laws" whereby those who are responsible for the destruction inflicted upon Cuba would be allowed to remain in power.

5) That Unidad Cubana, as an umbrella organization consisting of many member groups, respects their respective points of view as long as none of these is based on a dialog or *detente* with the tyranny.

6) That, just as we shall continue to help the dissident groups and the independent press, as well as those patriots who are waging war on the regime inside Cuba, we shall also continue to mobilize internationally to denounce those who would take over the resources stolen from Cuban and foreign citizens. Once Cuba is free of Castroism, we shall take these unscrupulous usurpers to court and force them to pay the appropriate reparations for their collaboration with Castro's totalitarian regime.

7) That we urge all those who agree with the total liberation of Cuba, and with the indictment of the criminals, to add their signatures to this Statement and join Unidad Cubana to help accomplish its high goals. Please call us at (305) 649-6950.

8) The leaders of Unidad Cubana reiterate their commitment to our country, to the people inside Cuba, and to the Cubans in exile, in order to achieve what those who have died on the altar of the Fatherland, the political prisoners, and those who chose the bitter path of exile, have been fighting for over the best years of their lives.

9) The only *Magna Carta* recognized by Unidad Cubana is the Constitution of 1940, which contains all the democratic elements that are needed for the reconstruction of Cuba.

10) Unidad Cubana wishes to take advantage of this opportunity to express its disagreement with the recent policy announced by the President of the United States in regard to Cuba. We feel that the almost 40 years of the Castro regime's inflexible totalitarian policy is more than sufficient to demonstrate that Fidel Castro will not change this policy because the U.S. government allows humanitarian aid to Cuba or direct flights to that country. Among many other things that we could state is the fact that this weak policy of opening to Castro without Castro making a single move concerning the respect of human rights in Cuba or its democratization, shows the dictator that to obtain concessions from the United States what he has to do is to continue oppressing the Cuban people.

Signed in Miami, Florida, U.S.A., in March, 1998, and read in a room of the Congress of the United States before Members of Congress friendly to Cuba's freedom, and the leadership of the Unidad Cubana.

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Political Booknotes

Playing the Market

by James Surowiecki

In Billy Wilder's 1954 film, "Sabrina," Humphrey Bogart plays the crusty old mogul who tells a radiant young Audrey Hepburn that he's not in business to make money, but to make products that do some good in the world. The success of a corporation, he says, should be measured not just by its profits, but by the quality and value of the things it actually makes.

Bogart's approach was, of course, successful in charming Audrey Hepburn. But it's been the opposite approach — the one that says getting a hefty return on your investment is what really matters — that ended up seducing American business. The result has been what you might call the financialization of the corporation. As Roberto Goizueta, former CEO of Coca-Cola, was fond of pointing out, good business essentially consists of borrowing money at one rate of interest and investing it at a higher rate of interest. And what you invest the money in matters much less, ultimately, than that rate of return.

This picture is exaggerated, of course. Even Bogart's company could only stay in business if it made a profit, and presumably investments are profitable in part because they provide a good or service that someone wants. (Coke, after all, is still the real thing even if it made Goizueta a billionaire.) But there has been a sea change in American business since the 1950s, one that has forced corporate managers to concentrate harder on the bottom line, to evaluate products ruthlessly in terms of their potential profitability, and to place the goal of ever-larger earnings over all others. Not coincidentally, this sea change has made American corporations more efficient, more profitable, and perhaps more productive. But it's also made them much tougher places to do business the Bogart way.

In an oblique way, it's the story of this transformation that G. Wayne Miller is trying to tell in his new book *Toy Wars*. Focusing on one corporation, Hasbro — makers of G.I. Joe and Mr. Potato Head — Miller shows how the pressures of being a publicly traded company forced Hasbro to replace its traditional product-driven mentality with a profit-driven one. Instead of worrying about whether a new toy was the best toy that could be made, we're meant to understand, Hasbro's executives now had to worry about whether that toy was going to provide an appropriate return on investment. More than that, the executives also had to worry about whether that toy was going to boost the company's stock price, and about the future of their jobs if they failed. So Miller gives us the shadowy figures of consultants called in to help restructure the corporation, consultants who ask workers to fill out surveys explaining what they do all day and who slash payrolls on the basis of incomplete information. With the "suits" on one side and the "people who knew toys" on the other, this is a movie we've seen before, and in the downsized '90s we know how it ends.

TOY WARS: The Epic Struggle Between G.I. Joe, Barbie, and the Companies That Make Them
by G. Wayne Miller
Times Books, $25

The problem with this movie, though, is that in Hasbro's case the story of cold-hearted consultants sabotaging the work of the creative toy people just won't fly. In part, that's because the "suits" seem to have been completely clueless, going about restructuring in a haphazard fashion. And in part it's because Miller's "toy people" don't really seem to have a good a sense of what makes a toy succeed or fail. Watching Hasbro execs wager $4 million in promotional spending on a $50 Elvis doll meant to entice "middle-aged women with memories and money to burn," all one can say is, "What were they thinking?"

The point, in other words, is that neither the restructuring gurus nor the old-time toy executives had a real solution to Hasbro's problems. As a result, although Miller suggests that Hasbro's experience tells us something important about the deleterious impact of bottom-line thinking, in fact all Hasbro's experience teaches us is that if you don't know where you want to go, you're going to have a hard time getting there. The restructuring was not a well-considered attempt at making the corporation more productive, but substituted cost-cutting for real reinvention. On the other side, Miller's toy people come off as overconfident in their ability to read the minds of eight-year-old children, slow to adjust to changing tastes, and much too comfortable in what amounted to executive sinecures. There are no Bogarts in Miller's boardrooms.

The really interesting thing about *Toy Wars*, then, is that in its attempt to show how the abandonment of a product-driven mentality hurt Hasbro, it actually shows how Hasbro used that supposed abandonment as an excuse to cover up its own product-driven miscues. Throughout *Toy Wars* the need to satisfy shareholders is an omnipresent one. "Wall Street was interested only in earnings and the price of stock — and how the chairman intended to multiply both," Miller writes. The implication is that the pressure to satisfy Wall Street forced Hasbro to make decisions it did not want to make, to replace creative geniuses with consultants and old friends with new suits. But while Wall Street's single-minded emphasis on earnings can be disastrous for a company, greedy investors have become an easy scapegoat for managers looking to explain their own failures. "Wall Street made me do it" doesn't work as an excuse when what you've done is create a mess.

In that sense, the real lesson of *Toy*

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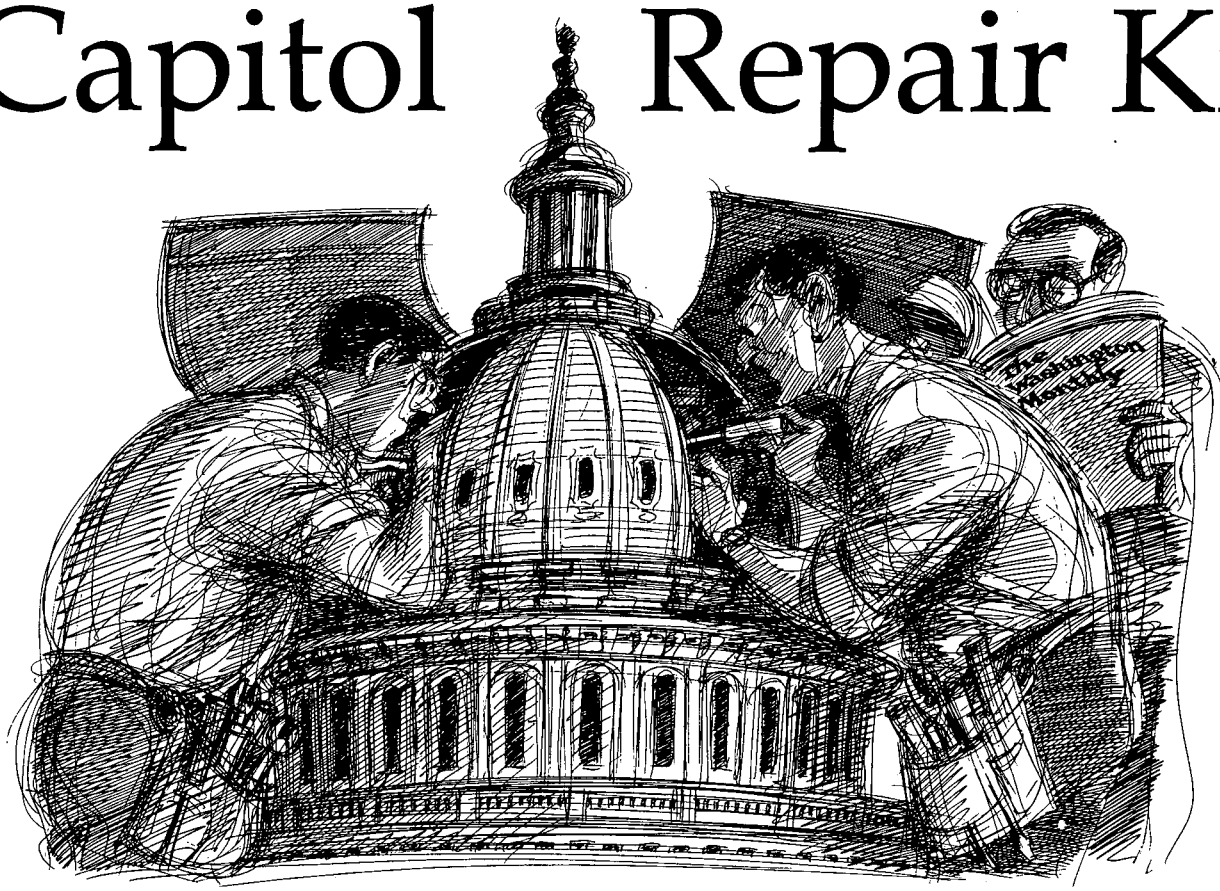

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Wars is not that Wall Street is a hard master, but that successfully managing a billion-dollar company is a hard task, especially when your target market consists of consumers with "the attention span of a gnat." Management is a skill that's difficult to analyze, but it is a skill that is real, and it's a skill that distinguishes companies that are continually more productive and efficient from those that are not. Hasbro imagined that its problems were little boys and Wall Street suits. But what *Toy Wars* shows is that for Hasbro, as for most companies, the problems that really mattered were inside.

JAMES SUROWIECKI *is a columnist for* Slate *magazine.*

An 800-Pound Gorilla on the Ropes

by Phillip J. Longman

SUDDENLY, THE JUICE SEEMS TO have gone out of the so-called third rail of American politics. Messing with Social Security used to be considered political suicide in Washington; "touch it, and you die" went the conventional wisdom. But now politicians across the political spectrum are openly calling for fundamental reform of what was once America's most popular social program. This spring, for example, President Clinton used a town hall meeting in Kansas City to launch what he hopes will become a "national debate" on Social Security; the Senate passed a resolution calling for privatization of at least part of the program, and even Daniel Patrick Moynihan, one of the program's staunchest supporters, introduced legislation calling for partial replacement of Social Security payments with private accounts.

What's behind the new politics of Social Security? There are many obvious factors, including the aging of the baby boom generation, the increasingly wide-spread and profitable participation by middle-class Americans in mutual fund investing, and the ever-more dire reports by Social Security's own trustees about the program's dismal future. But there is another factor that has received far less attention: The political decline of the American Association of Retired Persons.

For nearly a generation, the AARP has been among the most feared lobbies in Washington. With over 30 million members, the AARP is the second largest organization in the United States, after the Catholic Church. Its flagship magazine, *Modern Maturity*, has a larger circulation than *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report* combined. If AARP were a for-profit company, its total revenues would rank it in the top half of the Fortune 500. Not surprisingly, a 1997 *Fortune* article called AARP's executive director, Horace Deets, "Washington's Second Most Powerful Man."

TRUST BETRAYED: Inside the AARP
by Dale Van Atta
Regnery Publishing, $24.95

But inside AARP's lavish headquarters, staff members are trying hard to keep the lid on a secret many Washington insiders already suspect: The AARP is losing membership fast, and as a result, is losing its ability to take strong political positions.

This is by far the most important revelation in Dale Van Atta's new exposé of the AARP. An investigative reporter who earned his stripes working for the Jack Anderson column, Van Atta spent years probing the AARP, in the process developing a network of disgruntled former employees who provided him with a treasure chest of sensitive internal documents. Much of the information Van Atta developed concerns AARP's often-shady business dealings in peddling insurance, pills, and other services to its members. As damaging as this reporting is, however, much of it merely corroborates accounts that have appeared elsewhere. Van Atta's real scoop, which he unfortunately buries in the last chapter of his book, is that AARP's membership is, in the words of one AARP official, "dropping like stone."

At the beginning of 1994, AARP claimed a membership of 33,176,654. By the end of that year, they had lost a million members. Despite the tidal wave of baby boomers turning 50 and thereby becoming eligible for AARP membership, the losses have continued. According to Van Atta's sources, the AARP has done its best to disguise this erosion by cooking its books. For example, in 1995, the board quietly decided to increase the assumed number of AARP members with living spouses, thereby allowing it to claim 2.11 million additional members, even though actual membership was declining. Over the last three years, Van Atta estimates, AARP has seen its real rolls drop by 3 million. As a result, he estimates, AARP and its various business partners have lost more than $1.5 billion in gross revenues.

What's gone wrong? Virtually everything. The vast majority of AARP members, internal documents show, join for the membership discounts, but those discounts don't turn out to be worth the bother for increasing numbers of retirees. Van Atta quotes one former member as saying, "when we pay our annual membership dues to AARP, we're really just putting our name on a junk mail list." A 1995 internal study shows that 12 percent of members who quit give as their reason: "There are too many mailings."

AARP also has big political problems with its members, who are far more likely than retirees as a whole to be affluent, white, and Republican. The ardent support wielded by AARP's Washington staff for the Clinton health care plan caused deep resentment among such members, as has its support for a litany of liberal causes, including opposition to Clarence Thomas' nomination. At the same time, many left-leaning members resent the AARP's opposition to a single-payer health care system, which AARP headquarters finds objectionable presumably because of the threat it would pose to its mail-order pharmaceutical business. The lesson the AARP's business side has taken from these circumstances is that the AARP loses business every time it takes a strong political position, and so the group's chief lobbyist, John Rother, is under increasing pressure to pull his punches and keep a low profile.

Finally, despite extensive use of focus groups, the AARP is having no

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luck recruiting aging baby boomers. Many boomers see the organization, (correctly in my opinion) as having compromised their interests as future retirees, by for example, opposing meaningful Social Security reform. According to a summary of AARP's own polling and market research, to the extent that boomers want to join at all, they want the AARP to evolve into a non-partisan service organization, like the American Automobile Association. The organization that once boasted of being "the 800 pound gorilla in the middle of the road" is looking increasing like a paper tiger.

PHILLIP J. LONGMAN *is deputy business editor at* U.S. News & World Report.

Too Pat

by Dani Rodrik

PAT BUCHANAN HAS A MISSION: He wants to make protectionism respectable. The American public, he thinks, is being fed a pack of lies about international trade and its consequences. The perpetrators are politicians who ignore the lessons of American history, cosmopolitan economists who disregard facts in favor of theories, and a coterie of business elites who lack any sense of patriotic duty. The victims are the working people of America who have fallen on hard times — and for whom worse lies ahead unless the economic nationalism that made this country great is reinstated.

So goes the argument of Buchanan's new book, *The Great Betrayal.* This is unlikely to come as a surprise, unless you happen to have been on a different planet during the last two presidential campaigns and have never heard of CNN. Buchanan's fiery mix of conservative populism has long made him a household name. But this book is more than an ordinary political manifesto. It is Buchanan's attempt to rewrite American history through the prism of the import tariff. Buchanan wants to take on the scribes who cherish free trade on their own turf. Hence a book packed with charts, footnotes, and references to the works of economists, living and dead.

Buchanan's interpretation of American history is straightforward: Great things happened whenever the United States raised its tariffs on imports. Washington, Hamilton, and Madison all "abhorred 'free trade,'" Jefferson "ended his days as fierce an economic nationalist as Andrew Jackson," and Lincoln was "America's Great Protectionist." Import tariffs stood at 40 to 50 percent as America caught up with and surpassed Europe in manufacturing production during the five decades before World War I. The Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930 was not the highest in American history — that honor belongs to the Tariff of Abominations of 1828 — and in any case did not play a significant role in the Great Depression.

Buchanan thinks America's protectionist past should be the beacon for its future. He would like to see the U.S. declare its economic independence by imposing a 15 percent tariff on all imports that compete with domestic production. (Canada would be exempt provided it too adopted the 15 percent tariff.) But that is just the beginning. Developing countries would be hit by additional tariffs aimed at equalizing labor costs and calibrated to their wage differential with the U.S. Japan would also face special tariffs, unless Japanese companies were to shift auto production en masse to the U.S. China would be denied most-favored-nation status, NAFTA would be renegotiated, and membership in the World Trade Organization would be withdrawn.

THE GREAT BETRAYAL: How American Sovereignty and Social Justice Are Being Sacrificed to the Gods of the Global Economy
by Patrick J. Buchanan
Little, Brown & Co., $22.95

and

PROSPERITY: The Coming 20-Year Boom and What It Means to You
by Bob Davis and David Wessel
Times Books, $27.50

The trouble with Buchanan's vision is the blind spots. Buchanan's account makes it seem as if unpatriotic fat cats are the only ones who benefit from trade. He remains silent about the millions of workers who are employed in export-related industries, and whose livelihood would necessarily be threatened by a policy of economic nationalism. He is also silent about technological change, which is a much greater source of job churning and dislocation than trade. It is not clear what Buchanan's blueprint has to offer, say, the 37-year old high-school graduate who is unable to find a job paying more than the minimum wage after the video store that he used to manage closes. In practice this kind of job loss — due to shifts in consumer demands or in technology — overwhelms any that might be associated with import competition. For the bulk of displaced workers, there is very little to soften the blow in Buchanan's "humane economy" with its high tariffs but otherwise no government role in providing safety nets and educational opportunities.

The example of the video store manager is taken from the book by Bob Davis and David Wessel, *Prosper-*

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ity. Davis and Wessel are two *Wall Street Journal* reporters who think Buchanan and the other prophets of doom have got it exactly backward. They believe that we are about to enter a period of prosperity that will boost the nation's productivity and raise the incomes of the middle class.

Why the optimism? First, the revolution in information technology will finally show up in the productivity numbers. Second, community colleges will provide less-skilled workers with the education and training needed to work with the new technologies. And third, globalization — far from squeezing the middle class a la Buchanan — will open up new employment opportunities and raise the wages of U.S. workers. Technology, education, and globalization will combine to open a new golden era for the American economy.

On the face of it, Davis and Wessel's consummate optimism is easy to ridicule, but if you can get beyond the first few pages, you'll find yourself less of a skeptic by the end of the book. The two authors have done their homework. Their claims are based on a close reading of the economics literature and are buttressed by extensive interviewing. The idea that computers will soon give rise to a much-delayed productivity boom, for example, draws on Stanford economic historian Paul David's analogy with the gradual introduction of electricity in the nation's factories during the early part of the century. It is also nicely illustrated by the story of Maytag Corp.'s early years in Newton, Iowa, based on interviews with several surviving Maytag employees. The claims on education and globalization are also developed convincingly, combining insights from the academic literature with anecdotes from the lives of real people.

Since Davis and Wessel want to observe America's future through rose-tinted glasses, they are often forced to argue both sides of the issues. Their chapter on why computers have not yet paid off is a fascinating catalogue of wrong turns and false promises; unfortunately, it undercuts their subsequent argument about the productivity miracle just around the corner. They tout the benefits of global specialization exemplified by Silicon Valley's growing reliance on software engineers in Bangalore, India; in the same breath they discount worries that this may take jobs away from American programmers by arguing that the relevant trade is tiny (in which case, it follows that the economic benefits are commensurately small as well). They maintain that many of the new technologies in the work place, designed with the less skilled in mind, will favor American workers at the bottom of the wage scale; but they neglect to mention that such technologies will also make it easier for employers to replace American workers with Honduran or Chinese ones.

Davis and Wessel's all-too-short final chapter brings in the one institution that is curiously absent from the rest of the book: the government. The authors tick off a number of things they would like to see the government do: support community colleges and subsidize low-income students; consolidate and expand training and adjustment programs for displaced workers; increase federal funding for R&D; exhibit greater candor about the downside of globalization and trade agreements.

In view of the brevity of the final chapter, many readers will take the wrong message from the Davis and Wessel book, and conclude that shared prosperity will drop out of the sky as long as Washington does not screw up too badly. I doubt this is what the authors had in mind. Ultimately, their book works best not as a prediction, but as a plausible vision of what it would be possible for American society to achieve if all the pieces somehow fell into place. Making the vision a reality will require policies that take care of the losers and promote a sense of shared goals while fostering the transformations in education, technology, and globalization that Davis and Wessel foresee.

Given a choice, we are collectively much better off taking a gamble on Davis and Wessel's future than opting for Buchanan's idyllic past.

DANI RODRIK *is a professor of international political economy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.*

The Uncivil Society

by Adam Goodheart

LET ME START WITH A TALE OF two cities. I live now in Washington, D.C., in an apartment complex where I don't know my neighbors' names, although I do know what they watch on television, because the noise comes through the walls. The only time I come into contact with a broad cross-section of my fellow citizens is on the subway.

Not long before moving to Washington, I lived for a few months in a small town on the southern Italian coast. Every evening, nearly all the citizens, rich and poor, young and old, would gather in the piazza. Dressed to the nines, arm-in-arm with friends or relatives, they made stately laps of the baroque square. The young townspeople I knew told me that every night in the piazza, they saw their entire extended families, as well as nearly everyone else they'd ever known since they'd learned to walk. They also told me — almost every last one of them — that they longed for the day when they could move away and live somewhere else.

CIVILITY: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy
by Stephen L. Carter
Basic Books, $25

I suspect Stephen L. Carter, on the other hand, would rather enjoy living in that Italian town. In his new book, *Civility*, Carter joins the swelling ranks of writers (including Gertrude Himmelfarb, Alan Ehrenhalt, and Robert Putnam) who have bemoaned Americans' loss of community spirit and social graces. Carter, who teaches law at Yale, makes it clear that he is fed up with sullen sales clerks, heedless motorists, public displays of profanity, telemarketers, strangers who call him by his first name, and people who don't know the names of their own neighbors. In short, he believes — with some justice — that many of his fellow Americans have just about given up having any regard for the opinions and feelings of others.

"We care less and less about our fellow citizens," Carter writes. "We

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may see them as obstacles or competitors, or we may not see them at all, but unless they happen to be our friends, we rarely think we owe them anything. ... A big part of our incivility crisis stems from the fact that we do not know each other or even want to try; and, not knowing each other, we seem to think that how we treat each other does not matter."

This is no mere reminder to stand up straight and mind our language: Carter's definition of civility goes far beyond mere good manners, though these are part of what he has in mind. Rather, it rests ultimately on the biblical injunction to love thy neighbor. Carter's supreme example of a civil act, one that he refers to throughout the book, is the story of a neighbor who welcomed him and his family, who were black, when they moved into an all-white neighborhood in 1966. The woman "bustled into her house, only to emerge, minutes later, with a huge tray of cream cheese and jelly sandwiches, which she carried to out porch and offered around with her ready smile."

There's no denying that most Americans would find this image appealing. So the obvious question is: If it was so great, why don't we live that way anymore? What could have induced us to turn our backs on this Eden of smiling neighbors bearing sandwiches? Here is where Carter's account — like those of most communitarian writers — gets somewhat fuzzy. "I keep coming back to my long-standing hunch that it all began to go bad around 1965," Carter writes in a chapter titled "The Death of the Golden Age" — the golden age, as usual, being the 1950s. Lest we be shocked that one of America's leading black intellectuals should venerate the Eisenhower era, Carter quickly explains: In ridding ourselves of the bad traditions of racism and sexism, we also mistakenly threw out many of the good traditions that had sustained us. Technology played a part, as well. From television to the Internet, Carter writes, the inventions of the last half century have encouraged our radical solipsism. Could it be, though, that Americans actually know exactly what they want? That we've embraced technologies like the Internet not despite their distancing effects, but because of them?

There's always been a precarious balance between the individualist themes of our democracy and the communitarian ones. When Americans in the 1780s started bandying about possible designs for the new federal coinage, one prototype featured the proposed motto "E pluribus unum"; another, the words "Mind your business." Still, even radical democrats like Jefferson spoke endlessly of the citizenry's duty to support the common good actively, even strenuously. They called the fulfillment of this duty not "civility," but "virtue," a far broader and more challenging concept.

Carter draws not at all on this secular American tradition, preferring to encourage a return to traditional, unobjectionable Judeo-Christian values. He speaks in the gentle, thoughtful, slightly weary tone of a suburban pastor preaching the familiar homilies, knowing that his flock has heard it all before, knowing that he'll be giving the same sermon on countless Sundays to come. Perhaps "incivility" isn't a bad description of our predicament. But exhortations that we all just be nice to each other only trivialize a complicated set of problems, and an even more complicated history.

ADAM GOODHEART *is a columnist for* Civilization *magazine and a member of the editorial board of* The American Scholar.

Crime and Common Sense

by John Dilulio

SUSAN ESTRICH, THE ROBERT Kingsley Professor of Law and Political Science at the University of Southern California, is a prolific public intellectual and an increasingly familiar face on television talk shows. She first came to wide public attention as national campaign manager for Michael Dukakis. In 1989, at a forum at Johns Hopkins University, a young woman asked her, "What should Governor Dukakis have done about Willie Horton?" "Kept him in prison," she quipped. In chapter three of *Getting Away with Murder*, she answers the "Willie Horton question"

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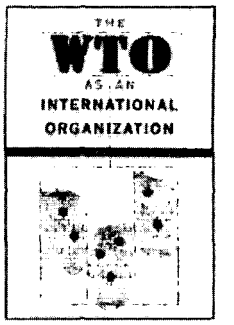

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once and for all:

> What should we do with Willie Horton? Lock him up. Should a man who rapes while out on furlough have been furloughed? Obviously not. The system failed. It doesn't matter what race he is ... It is not the disproportionate impact of punishment that makes the system racist but the disproportionate impact of our failures at prevention — that is what renders our politics suspect. The only way to address racism in the criminal justice system is to cut the crime rate among blacks — to try to inoculate the children, even as we punish many of their fathers and brothers. It is not racist to lock up Willie Horton. But planning prisons for preschoolers is.

On matters ranging from the evidence on racial disparities in sentencing (black defendants who go on trial, she notes, are in fact convicted less often for crimes of violence than white defendants) to the need for "Honest Lawyers," Estrich is consistently candid, often convincing, and eminently reasonable without feigning academic condescension.

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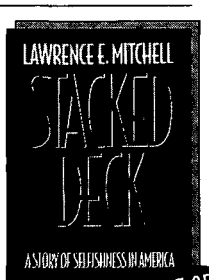

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Still, *Getting Away with Murder* is bound to be controversial, especially among critical legal theorists, jury nullification fans, and Democratic liberal elites who still have trouble understanding that those who mumble "incarceration" will neither be heard nor heeded when they shout "prevention."

In the book's prologue, Estrich recounts how one "well born" faculty colleague diagnosed her resistance to the idea that legal process should be taught as an object lesson in relativism. It resulted, he said, from her "working class roots." The treatment infuriated her; besides, she grew up "solidly middle class."

GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER: How Politics Is Destroying the Criminal Justice System

by Susan Estrich

Harvard University Press, $19.95

Indeed, Estrich studied hard in college, worked her ass off in law school, lost her father, graduated without a dime, earned a tenured professorship at Harvard, bravely published *Real Rape* (she herself was a rape victim), and has since proceeded on a remarkable and public-spirited career as an author, activist, and commentator. In this book, she engages her critics and, if anything, gives them better than they deserve.

The book's first chapter is a lucid summary of competing legal doctrines and moral claims pertaining to how our justice system sorts, charges, tries, sentences (or frees) persons accused of criminally stealing human life. When it comes to "comparing killers," she emphasizes, it is exceedingly difficult to treat like cases alike. But that is no excuse, she argues, for abandoning the "reasonable man" standard, admitting every celebrity-killer "abuse excuse" and "sympathy defense" circumstances, or (a la her discussion of Johnny Cochran's tactics) subverting the fact-seeking trial process with emotional pleas to "Send them a message." Her reasonable woman standard is as powerful as it is simple: The system should do everything within the realm of constitutional and moral propriety to convict and punish the guilty and acquit the innocent.

Although Estrich does not make the calculation, there are today an estimated 500,000 persons who have committed some type of homicide living free in the community. In the early 1990s, most persons convicted of criminally taking life served fewer than a dozen years behind bars. There is little research that compares the records of killers on death row to the records of paroled murderers, but, whatever one's position on the death penalty (Estrich used to be against it but now is for it; I used to be for it but now have multiple reservations), it would seem important to know whether any sizable fraction of released killers have records that make them virtually indistinguishable from any sizable fraction of killers who, de jure, retain a date with the executioner but, de facto, are serving sentences of life without parole. It would also seem important to note that, according to the best available studies, most paroled murderers go straight, and, as I have witnessed over the last few years via my work with inner-city churches, not a few have led exemplary lives of community service and literally saved young lives.

In a few places, Estrich cites statistics and other data from secondary sources that don't get it exactly right. (On page 92, she cites a projection — "40,000 homicides in the early decades of the next century" — attributed to me in a magazine article and since repeated by several journalists, but that I never, in fact, made.) But given the depth, breadth, and wisdom of this book, and given how perceptive and right on the money she is with respect to complicated empirical research findings on such matters as the inefficacy of mandatory minimum drug laws, such minor shortcomings are entirely pardonable.

"To believe in the rule of law in a democracy," Estrich concludes, "is to believe in a way of doing politics built on faith in one another's good intentions, however, misinformed, naive, or even stupid we may sometimes be." Case closed.

JOHN DIIULIO *is a professor of politics and public affairs at Princeton University and senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute.*

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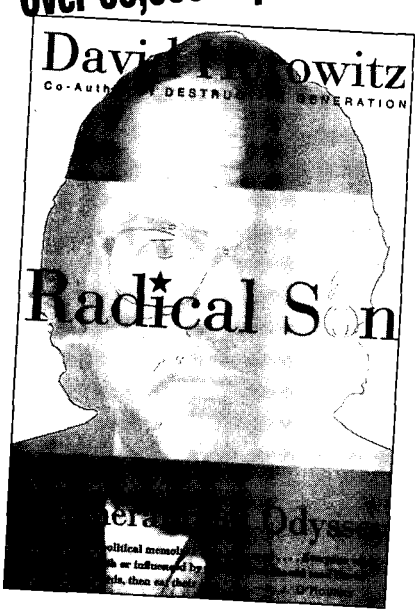

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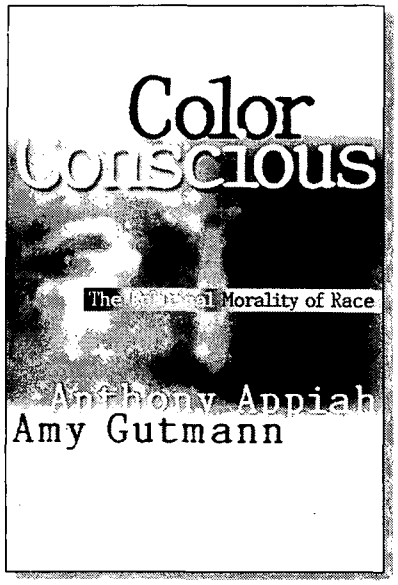

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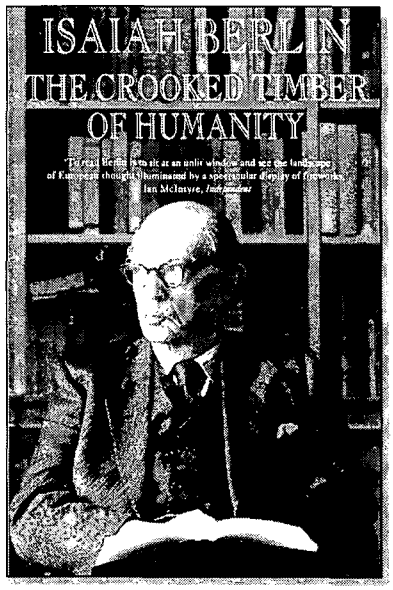

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